



LENS Wildlife Watch

LENS Long Eaton Natural
History Society

Autumn 2015

Volume 2 Issue 16

CONSERVATION AREA STATUS FOR TRENT LOCK



Erewash Canal at Trent Lock Marion Bryce

Popular tourist spot Trent Lock at Sawley is one of four best sites to see plants in Derbyshire according to the recently published Derbyshire Flora. The River Trent corridor and its marshes and pools are a stronghold for a number of wetland plants such as purple loosestrife, common clubrush and nodding bur-marigold. Short walks lead to varied sites of botanical interest: The floodbanks to see spiny restharrow and field mouseear; the Erewash Canal to see flowering rush and yellow water lily and Derbyshire Wildlife's Trust's Ash Tip Nature Reserve to see wood small-reed. The car park is free! Erewash Borough Council are currently considering awarding conservation area status to Trent Lock to protect its heritage and history so have your say.

LENS AT TOTON MEDIAEVAL FAYRE

Marion, Derek and Alan set up LENS stall with a theme of lichens and pollution at Toton's very first Mediaeval Fayre held September 27. It was a lovely day, there were talks and the finds from the recent archaeological dig were on display.



Marion Bryce and
Alan Heath in
front of LENS
new display
screen gratefully
sponsored by
East Midlands
Airport

Photo credit
Derek Brumbill

Inside this issue:

Trent Lock/Toton Fayre	1
LES Ecoday/Derby Museum Nature Gallery/Barkers Pond	2
Partial Eclipse Sun	3
Forbes Hole LNR	4-5
Caddis	6-7
Summer Outings	8-23
New Trees for West Park	24
Creeping Plants	25
Reptiles	25
Bumblebee Transects	25
Trowell Marsh LNR	26
Future events Contact details	26

Report wildlife records including mammal records for inclusion in the new Nottinghamshire Mammal Atlas to LENS Recorder

LENSnaturalhistory@gmail.com

Wildlife emergency number call police 08456 058058

Fungal Forays
Wildbeverley.com

Long Eaton School Eco Day

On Wednesday 1st July, John and myself, along with Joan Breakwell and Christine Carrier, attended the Eco Day at Long Eaton School. We used our familiar garden bird identification board together with butterflies, dragonflies and fungi found in our garden. Joan and Christine organised a multiple choice insect quiz with photographs of insects that Joan had found in her garden. She had also brought a live millipede and centipede which the children found fascinating. We also included a drawing of a tawny owl, with the idea that feathers

which had been shed by ducks that visit our garden, could be glued. This was ideal for the less able pupils and the many disabled visiting our displays. The resultant finished product is a remarkable baby owl!

On Sunday 5th July, John and myself attended the Kirk Hallam Lakeside Festival. The Festival was a bigger event than that of previous years but unfortunately we were placed some distance away from the main path so fewer people visited our display. Fay Blackburn



Fay's Baby Owl

Photo credit Fay Blackburn

Derby Museum Nature Gallery

David Gell and Marion attended the launch of the new Nature Gallery at Derby Museum. Dedicated volunteers worked to create 'Notice Nature Feel Joy'. We were met by Freddy the Fox, and the centrepiece of the exhibition is the Allenton Hippo skeleton.

There were speeches by Tony Butler, Andrea Hadley-Johnson, Alison Martin and Michaela Strachan and we enjoyed the Mojitos!

The message was loud and clear, noticing nature increases the desire to learn about, protect and respond to nature. Connecting with nature improves health and wellbeing

Go and see the nature gallery for yourself. It is open in the Derby Museum and Art Gallery, The Strand, Derby, DE1 1BS. Open Tuesday – Saturday: 10am-5pm, Sunday: 12-4pm and Bank Holiday Mondays: 10am-5pm <http://dmnature.tumblr.com/>



Michaela Strachan at Derby Museum

Photo credit Internet

Our Garden/Barkers Pond 25.2.15 - 31.7.15

Continuing on from our last report, reed bunting still frequented our garden on most days until 6th May in varying numbers, the largest count on 13th March when 5 males and 1 female visited the garden. A grey wagtail hopped around the garden pool on 26th Feb. On 13th March we were amazed when a moorhen came into the garden as we hadn't even seen one on Barker's Pond for nearly a year. We had welcome sightings in the garden of a song thrush on 6th April and 28th June with a visit of a juvenile on 21st July and 2 juveniles on 24th July. Other rare visitors included a blackcap on 15th and 18th April, a female great spotted woodpecker on 5th and 6th May and a male on 19th July. A sparrowhawk landed on the rockery by the pool on 21st June. A pair of bullfinches enjoyed a spell on the feeders on 24th

July. Butterflies noted included, brimstone, peacock, large and small white, holly blue, with just rare sightings of speckled wood, orange tip and red admiral (usually frequent visitors to the garden) no record on comma or small tortoiseshell. One unusual spectacle in the garden was that of a mating pair of poplar hawk moths. Goosanders, in varying numbers, visited Barker's Pond up until 15th March, the majority comprising 8m and 6f on 25th Feb. A coot was seen on 27th Feb but there has been no evidence of a nest this year. Two moorhens subsequently arrived and successfully reared two young. Three swans visited the pond on 24th March and a pair remained until 27th. Another pair was present on 17th April but as usual failed to nest, probably due to the presence of fishermen. **Fay Blackburn**

Two oystercatchers were a surprising observation on 12th July, calling whilst circling briefly over the pond before flying away towards the Erewash Canal.



Poplar Hawk Moths

Photo credit Fay Blackburn

www.lensweb.wordpress.com

PARTIAL ECLIPSE OF THE SUN Report by Alan Heath

An excellent view of the eclipse was seen at Long Eaton in almost perfect conditions.

Sky was slightly hazy but this was not a problem. ECLIPSE START at Long Eaton at 08.25 and ended at 10.41

The Eclipse was observed mainly with the Celestron-8 at X50 but the photographs were taken with the 10-in (250mm) Reflector using an 'Orion' 8-in (200mm) Solar filter.

A total of eight photographs were taken using Kodak ISO 200 film.

For the convenience of visitors other telescopes were in use which included a Celestron-90 and a 2-in (50mm) Refractor set up to project the image into a dark box.

A view was also made using the Coronado Solar Max 40 at X 33 to view in Ha light.

BBC Radio Derby paid a visit and I made a live broadcast about the eclipse.

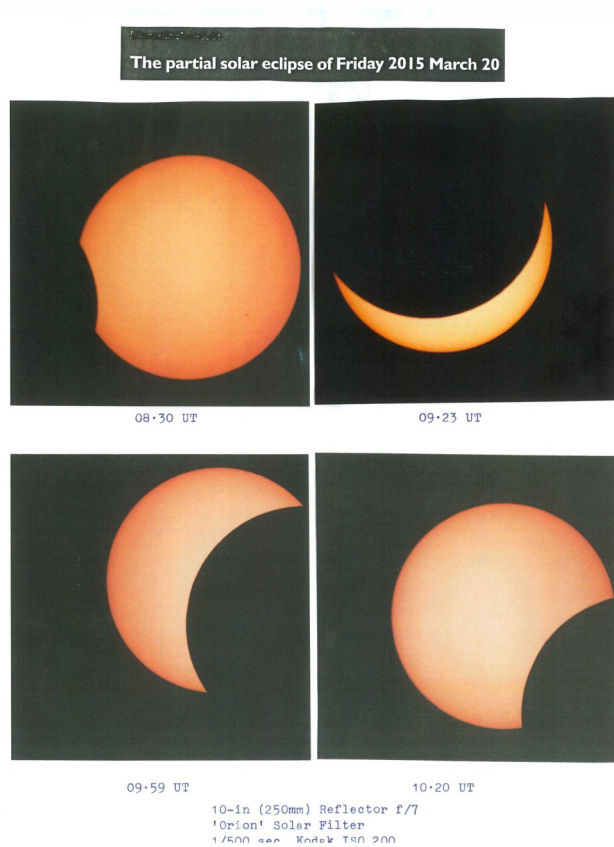
Richard Cliff (a visitor) took a number of photographs with his Canon Digital Camera using a Welder's No 14 filter.

It was a very enjoyable eclipse in ideal conditions despite prediction of cloud. It did arrive just as the eclipse was over

PARTIAL SOLAR ECLIPSE – 2015 PARTIAL SOLAR ECLIPSE – 2015 March 20

U.T. LIGHT INTENSITY PHOTOGRAPH

08.00	10 20	171 174 180	
30	183	08.30	
40	178		
50	167		
09.00	152	09.00	
10	123		
15	102		
25	63	09.23	
35	59	09.33	X2
40	67		
45	98		
50	125		
10.00	161	09.59	
10	190		
15	215		
20	253	10.20	X2
30	284		
40	290		
50	290		
11.00	298		



The SKY was clear until around 10.00 when some cloud was coming up but did not cover the Sun.

It was 4/8 cloud 10.20 and 6/8 cloud 10.40 when the eclipse ended. The sky was overcast at 11.00

PREDICTED TIMES OF THE ECLIPSE – Start 08.25 Max 09:31 End 10.40

NOTE : There was a single Sunspot on the disc. The Moon had reached this spot at 09.13 and the spot had gone

at 09.13 1/2 The spot reappeared at 10.33 and was three sunspot diameters from the Moon at 10.35

Friends of Forbes Hole LNR

Sunshine and the hollow knocking of the greater spotted woodpecker high in an aged poplar greeted 7 members of the Friends of Forbes Hole who met for the annual pond dipping event

While Alan checked out the pond life, Ady and Dave Gell prepared the pond side bank of fine dredged silt for wildflower seeding.



Forbes near large pond steps 18 April 2015

Photo credit Marion Bryce



Forbes near large pond steps 18 July 2015

Photo credit Marion Bryce



Friends of Forbes Hole 18 April 2015

Bryan Sewell, Marion Bryce, Adrian Orrell, Dave Gell, Joan Breakwell, Barnaby Bryce

Photo credit Marion Bryce

Barnaby and Bryan cleared the ash and hawthorn saplings from the receding pond edge, creating more cover for small mammals with the stacked wood. Marion and Joan carried out a litter sweep of the footpaths much distracted by a fresh flush of butterflies, peacock, brimstone, small tortoiseshell and green veined white with orange tip and speckled wood seen for the first time this year. Considering the amount of ivy shifted we deserved to see some holly blues! Bryan took time out to clear a path to the wood violets and we were pleased to see the lonely cowslip had 2 companions this year. A serene swan centrally situated on a nest of reeds looked on with approbation. A pair of hobby's feeding on dragonflies screamed throughout the sunny and successful butterfly day which was held in June. A painted lady visited the buddlia and it was a good year for red admirals. Blue butterflies had a very slow start but numbers had built up by the end of the summer.

It was an interesting year for Forbes Hole, fine leaved water dropwort, lesser spearwort and amphibious persicaria appeared in cleared areas. An aged alder buckthorn was recorded and buckthorn has been planted, good news for brimstone butterflies. A new noticeboard and wastebins were installed. The pond has receded, water levels are the lowest ever, this has resulted in willow growing on the pond margins. Richard Ashley, Operations Manager for Erewash Borough Council has investigated the problem of low water which started when a nearby industrial estate was drained. With the aid of Bryan Sewell's local knowledge, the feeder stream has been identified and we are hopeful the feeder stream can be restored and the pond can be restored to the original water level. Marion Bryce

18 April 2015 FORBES HOLE LNR

Previous weather – Variable cloud and sunny periods

Present weather – Fine and sunny

MAIN POND 10.30AM pH 7.8 Water level very low

Diaptomus-A: Cyclops 0: Simocephalus 0:

Bosmina – C: Daphnia VR: Cydcrus – VR; Chironomus larva VR; Cleon nymph – VR

NOTE: First time Volvox seen since 2002

SMALL POND – 10.45am pH 7.4 Water level very low

NOTE: The difference in pH between the two ponds

Due to the removal of the steps, this pond is difficult to access but Joan Breakwell and Marion Bryce managed to get down. Joan obtained a sample but due to the low water level it was difficult to sweep the net properly. However, the following were found

Cyclops – R; Ascellus – VR; Simocephalus –R;

Diaptomus – R; Cloeon nymph – R; Nematode – VR;

Unidentified infusoris – O

OTHERS:Two swans seen with nest at the reed island, in the main pond. Two coots with three young.

The visit was with LENS and was followed by conservation work.

Lack of rain has contributed to the low water levels in both ponds.

Until the steps have been replaced at the Small Pond it may not be possible to sample there. This will result in a break in the records but every effort will be made to maintain the record.

Alan Heath



Forbes LNR small pond 24 May 2015 Marion Bryce



Twayblade Forbes Hole LNR 24 May 2015
Marion Bryce



Dried willow roots Forbes LNR large pond 24 May 2015
Marion Bryce



Alder Buckthorn Forbes Hole LNR 24 May 2015
Marion Bryce

CADDIS IN LONG EATON

This week I received the 2014 report of the Caddisfly Occurrence Scheme from Stuart Crofts. Throughout the summer I collect one specimen of each kind of caddis which I find in the moth trap I run and send them to Stuart for identification. Painstakingly and heroically Stuart has identified 35 different species from my Long Eaton garden. Most of them are species found in streams, ponds, canals and temporary pools.

What are Caddis?

Classified 'Trichoptera' Caddis look like brown flies but caddis have two pairs of hairy membranous wings and long antennae. They are weak fliers and flutter like the closely related moths.

Fishermen call them sedges and copy their shape and colour when tying fishing flies .



How can I see them?

They are usually found in or near water

Adults are active at night and may be attracted to light

Caddis life cycle

Aquatic larvae spin silk and may be grouped :

free-living caddis build a case just before pupation

net-spinning caddis

case-building 'tube' caddis

Athripsodes albifrons Photo credit Marion Bryce



Caddis pupate in a cocoon spun from silk and emerge as fully formed winged adults.

Many caddis emerge synchronously en masse.

The non-feeding adult stage may last for 2 months.

Once mated, the female lays a gelatinous mass of eggs in the water which quickly hatch

Larvae usually go through 5 stages of development (called instars)

Caddis may complete their life cycles in a year.

Limnephilid larva Photo credit Marion Bryce

What use are they?

Caddis larvae graze water plants and recycle animal and plant debris

Caddis are a significant food source and are eaten by birds, bats, amphibians and fish

Caddis larvae are sensitive to oxygen levels and chemicals in water

Like canaries in coal mines, caddis communities are used to assess water quality



Fish eye view of Limnephilus flavicornis Photo credit Marion Bryce

How many Caddis are there?

200 UK species have been described of 12 000 world wide



Phryganeidae, great sedges, can have a wingspan of 8cm
Limnephilidae, cinnamon sedges, are also known as northern caddis

Leptoceridae are called long-horned caddis

Microcaddis, Hydroptilidae are very small (less than 4mm), so small you can easily miss them and may be unaware

of their existence. Marion Bryce 16 March 2015

Phryganea bipunctata Photo credit Marion Bryce

List of Long Eaton Caddis all IDs by Stuart Crofts

Hydroptilidae	<i>Agraylea multipunctata</i>	Salt and pepper microcaddis
Leptoceridae	<i>Athripsodes albifrons</i>	Longhorn sedge
Leptoceridae	<i>Athripsodes aterrimus</i>	Longhorn sedge
Leptoceridae	<i>Athripsodes cinereus</i>	Longhorn sedge
Leptoceridae	<i>Ceraclea dissimilis</i>	Scaly wing sedge
Leptoceridae	<i>Ceraclea fulva</i>	Scaly wing sedge
Leptoceridae	<i>Ceraclea senilis</i>	Scaly wing sedge
Polycentropodidae	<i>Cyrnus flavidus</i>	Yellow spotted sedge
Polycentropodidae	<i>Cyrnus trimaculatus</i>	Yellow spotted sedge
Glossosomatidae,	<i>Glossosoma boltoni</i>	Little brown short horned sedge
Hydropsychidae	<i>Hydropsyche contubernalis</i>	Marbled sedge
Hydropsychidae	<i>Hydropsyche pellucidula</i>	Spotted sedge
Hydroptilidae	<i>Hydroptila sparsa</i>	Microcaddis
Lepidostomatidae	<i>Lepidostoma hirtum</i>	Small silver sedge
Leptoceridae	<i>Leptocerus tinaeformis</i>	Longhorn sedge
Limnephilidae	<i>Limnephilus affinis</i>	Cinnamon Sedge
Limnephilidae	<i>Limnephilus auricula</i>	Cinnamon Sedge
Limnephilidae	<i>Limnephilus binotatus</i>	Cinnamon Sedge
Limnephilidae	<i>Limnephilus flavicornis</i>	Cinnamon Sedge
Limnephilidae	<i>Limnephilus lunatus</i>	Cinnamon Sedge
Limnephilidae	<i>Limnephilus marmoratus</i>	Cinnamon Sedge
Molannidae	<i>Molanna angustata</i>	Grey chequered sedge
Leptoceridae	<i>Mystacides azurea</i>	Longhorn sedge
Leptoceridae	<i>Mystacides longicornis</i>	Longhorn sedge
Leptoceridae	<i>Mystacides nigra</i>	Longhorn sedge
Polycentropidae	<i>Neureclipsis bimaculata</i>	Little red twilight sedge
Leptoceridae	<i>Oecetis ochracea</i>	Longhorn sedge
Phryganeidae	<i>Phryganea bipunctata</i>	Great red sedge
Phryganeidae	<i>Phryganea grandis</i>	Great red sedge
Polycentropidae	<i>Polycentropus flavomaculatus</i>	Yellow spotted sedge
Limnephilidae	<i>Potamophylax latipennis</i>	Large cinnamon sedge
Psychomyiidae	<i>Psychomyia pusilla</i>	Small yellow sedge
Psychomyiidae	<i>Tinodes assimilis</i>	Small red sedge
Psychomyiidae	<i>Tinodes waeneri</i>	Small red sedge

HOLME PIT AND ST MARY'S CHURCH

Holme Pit Clifton and St Mary's Church – short walk in Clifton nature reserves, followed by tour of church (with refreshments).

Meet 7pm at fishermen's car park near end of Clifton Hall Drive.

Grid ref SK 541 349 Postcode NG11 8NH

Leaders Christine Carrier (walk) and Clare Ashton (churchwarden)

Holme Pit (also known as Colonel Clifton's Pond) is owned by Nottingham City Council and was designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1982. It forms part of the Clifton Woods, Clifton Grove and Holme Pit Local Nature Reserve (LNR). A well maintained path runs along the foot of the escarpment through Clifton Grove to Clifton Woods and Holme Pit and is part of the Trent Valley Way. The pond originated as a marl pit sometime before 1763 and has connections to the Clifton family and Clifton Hall which stands on the nearby escarpment. It is surrounded by reed-swamp, wet grassland and willow carr vegetation with rare sedges. It suffers flooding from the River Trent, so is prone to silting and was last dredged in 2008.



15 LENS members met under a gloowering sky and followed a stoney path winding between steep banks covered with the distressed pale green leaves of snowdrops. A green woodpecker yaffled from the mixed sycamore, elm, beech and ash woods lining the V shaped grove. Gazing up to the escarpment gleaming white veins of satin spar gypsum shone from a clean red stained exposure of sedimentary rock.

A rock exposure at Clifton Grove 27 April 2015

Photo credit Marion Bryce

A song thrush sang as the sun burst through, and the heavenly hyacinth scent of bluebells drew us to look at the flowers. Cream sepals confirming the true English bluebell we listed the plants, dog's mercury, cowslip, yellow archangel, green alkanet.



Where willows were soaking their feet in still pools, bright yellow flowers of marsh marigold shone against the brilliant sun. A board walk led through reed beds where we watched a grey heron probe for smooth newts along the farthest edge of the huge pond. A dark and dramatic sky contrasted the smooth silver water. Hurriedly ticking off cowslip, cuckoo flower and brooklime.

Holme Pit 27 April 2015

Photo credit Marion Bryce

Too soon, we were running to meet the church wardens at St Mary's Church, a Catholic church registered in the 1086 Domesday book, sacked by Henry VIII, now fully restored with superb concert quality acoustics. We sat inside, sipping tea, feeling the history. The lost heart of a Clifton, fabulous Clifton alabaster knights in repose, brass rubbings and a giant black prince. Outside bats flew around the central church tower and tawny owls called. Marion Bryce 27 April 2015

NOTTINGHAM CANAL PART II – A TALE OF THE RIVER BANK

Mon May 11, Nottingham Canal – 2 mile walk along good paths.

Meet 7pm at Erewash Valley Trail sign on Cossall Industrial Estate. In Ilkeston turn right off Chalons Way at Tescos roundabout. At first roundabout after River Erewash turn slightly right towards Awworth (Coronation Rd) & immediately right following Soloman Road left and to the end.

Grid ref SK 478 427

Leader John Haynes

As the car wound through the grey industrial estate at Cossall we saw a large hill made of colliery waste, which used to be a ski slope, it all seemed a bit grey and grim, John Haynes had offered to show LENS members another of his favourite spots on the Nottingham Canal and this was not what we were expecting.

We felt cheered as we met in the car park it was such a sunny evening and a short walk to the canal showed waterside plants, cuckoo flower, greater pond sedge and watercress flowering. The lance-like leaves of water dock were bright green palisades lining the waterside. A solitary swan was seen where the old canal, built in 1796, has the indignity of a piped crossing of Coronation Road. We had taken our net, but despite Norman's best efforts we caught no amphibians, although he did see a pike. That might have been why the mallards had no ducklings? The moorhen proudly showed off her black fluffy newborn chicks but the grumpy coots were still spread out, sitting on their twiggy mounds.

Meandering across scrubby meadow we looked for flowers, John had been disappointed at the lack of flowers on the walkover but tonight we had English bluebells, cowslip, red campion, creeping buttercup and greater stitchwort. Back by the canal we looked towards the Cossall Parish Council's Millenium Park which is a Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust managed Blue Butterfly site, difficult to access as the bridge over the canal was condemned!

Interesting plants by the canal were the winged stems of common comfrey, also known as knit-bone, foetid iris, and the St John's Wort with perforated leaves. There was also one plant of white horehound, another herb, which seems to be more common these days.

Culpepper's Herbal says: 'White horehound helpeth to expectorate tough phlegm from the chest, being taken with the roots of Irris or Orris. There is a syrup made of this plant which I would recommend as an excellent help to evacuate tough phlegm and cold rheum from the lungs of aged persons, especially those who are asthmatic and short winded.

Being aged and short winded I don't think we got very far on the walk but we all agreed that that it had been an excellent evening stroll and the star of the show was the water vole.

The European *water vole* or northern *water vole*, *Arvicola amphibius* (formerly *A. terrestris*), is a semi-aquatic rodent. It is often informally called the water rat. Almost 20 years ago a national survey showed that water vole populations had reduced by 90%. A national water vole monitoring Programme has been set up by the People's Trust for Endangered Species, a recount in 900 specific locations, so that they can advise conservation groups on



Water Vole

Photo credit Joan Breakwell

which actions will bring about positive change.

Tonight we had plenty to report. We had seen small and large water voles, water voles swimming, water voles balancing on a floating branch, water voles eating reeds and water voles which posed for photographs and videos, lacking the shyness of most furry mammals.

A true 'Tale of the River Bank'.

Marion Bryce 12 May 2015

NEWT DELAYS TRAIN

When Derbyshire County Council applied for funding early in 2013 it was hoped the new Ilkeston Railway Station would open in December 2014. The discovery of protected Great Crested Newts in the immediate area contributed to increased costs and delays. A freedom of information request, reported in the Ilkeston Advertiser 24 February 2015, revealed that 171 Great Crested Newts, and 197 smooth newts had been found on site and work continues to capture and relocate the newts.

Great crested newts are the largest of the UK's three native species growing up to 17cm. They are dark brown or black in colour with a distinct 'warty' skin. The underside is bright orange with irregular black blotches, the tail has a white flash. Due to enormous declines in range and abundance in the last century, Great crested newts are a European protected species. All life stages, adults, tadpoles and eggs, their breeding sites and resting places are protected by law. It is an offence to: kill, injure, capture or disturb them; damage or destroy their habitat; or to possess, sell or trade.



Great Crested Newt

Photo credit Marion Bryce

Although widespread in lowland Britain their distribution is patchy. They are abundant in some small areas, but nationally the species is threatened. The decline is due to loss of habitat. They need both aquatic and terrestrial habitat, areas that ideally contain ponds with neutral pH, rough grassland, scrub and woodland, They live around 10 years, spending most of their lives hunting on land. When breeding, the newts and their young, called efts, swim around in open water so they prefer breeding in ponds that dry out occasionally, with no fish.

Building and development work can harm great crested newts and their habitats. If you can't avoid (even accidentally):

- capturing, killing, disturbing or injuring them
- damaging or destroying breeding or resting places
- obstructing access to their resting or sheltering places

You need a mitigation licence from Natural England. You'll need expert help from a trained ecologist to show what you'll do to reduce the impacts of the proposed work on great crested newts and to show that there is no satisfactory alternative. Typical mitigation measures for great crested newts include counting, capturing and translocating, exclusion fences and pond creation or restoration

Activities you can do that wouldn't break that law include:

- rescuing a great crested newt if it would die otherwise
- doing work to a pond during the winter when no great crested newts are likely to be present
-

The site for the new Ilkeston Railway Station is only about 150m from the A6096 Awworth link road, which links Rutland Street in Ilkeston to the A6096 Awworth by-pass, where Great Crested Newts were discovered in March 2007. The county council had to apply to Natural England for a licence to remove the newts and then extensive work was carried out to trap them and re-house them elsewhere. The area was declared newt free in October 2007. It seems the statement was premature as Great Crested Newts, like toads, have a homing instinct and will return to their traditional breeding grounds if possible.

If you would like to get better acquainted with these warty dragons contact:

Derbyshire Amphibian and Reptile Group secretary@derbyshirearg.co.uk

Marion Bryce 2 April 2015

MEETING WITH REMARKABLE TREES AT WOLLATON PARK

Trees of Wollaton Park - an easy walk looking at a range of native & introduced trees. Some Champions & historic veteran trees.

Start at lower car park near main entrance off Wollaton Road near children's playground.

Grid ref SK 530 398 Postcode NG8 2AE

Leader Graham Pearce



There are thousands of trees of 170 species at Wollaton Park planted as specimens, avenues, copses and plantations. Graham had chosen 20 for us to admire on this evening walk.

The flat topped black pine *Pinus nigra* subsp *laricio* at the lower gate is the formerly widely planted Corsican pine, now new planting is banned due to the risk of spreading red needle blight. We turned to admire a national champion Turkish Hazel *Corylus colurna* 150 years old, now as tall as the surrounding trees. There are 15 champion trees in the park. The Romans introduced sweet

chestnut *Castanea sativa*, with edible nuts and timber so useful

for fencing and poles. Smell the pollen in July. Hybrid lime *Tilia europea* 'pallida' has a clean trunk, not like the untidy suckers on the parent plant, it has a relationship with lime tree aphids which are attracted to the pollution damaged leaf surfaces, the honeydew that we think causes a nuisance, actually improves the fertility of the soil which is how the tree survives pollution. Broad leaved lime *Tilia platyphyllos* is infrequent in the wild, the dark hairy leaf curves down and has a silky feel.

The small leaved lime *Tilia cordata* is the other parent of the hybrid, floriferous with a glaucous heart shaped leaf which has tufts of brown hairs beneath. The trunk was covered with spots, white circles with a central brown scale, *Pulvinaria regalis* the horse chestnut scale. Each scale is a dead female sheltering 3000 eggs, it was first noticed in Nottingham in 1992. Bright red nail galls were on the leaves, each lime species has it's own species of nail gall mite. Graham reflected that the insect pollinated small leaved lime deserved to be the quintessential English tree as lowland lime woodlands predominated before land clearance. The tight grained wood does not splinter, is good for turning and the choice for morris dancer's sticks. The fibrous bast which is the phloem beneath the bark is used to make the rope for church bells. According to Missa the ground fruit mixed with dried lime flowers makes delicious chocolate.



The English walnut, *Juglans regia* needs an open position, it is late into leaf and has early leaf fall. It was introduced by the Romans. In the American civil war citizens were called up 'to carry walnut', the roots of the walnut are always dug out as the best wood for gunstocks.

The signature trees for a deer park are oak and beech, the mast improves the doe's milk. The English oak *Quercus robur* has attitude. It is heavy low and branching the lobed leaves are stalked and the leaf veins chase to the lobes and sinus of the blade.

To distinguish pedunculate, sessile *Quercus petraea* and hybrid oaks there is a mathematical formula used after taking a set series of measurements. Turkey oak *Quercus cerris* has a narrower more indented leaf and a mossy acorn cup. An attractive tree but the timber splits. It is being removed from many parks as it is an alternate host for the knopper gall wasp. Red oak *Quercus rubra* is a fast growing weed, the autumn colour disappoints and the acorns which take 2 years to form, often abort.



250 years is the maximum age for a beech tree *Fagus sylvatica* before they suddenly collapse and fragment. Copper beech naturally grows from 2 in every 1000 nuts. Years of selecting dark ones has given the purple beech *Fagus sylvatica f purpurea* which can be seen to be grafted.

In a blaze of sunshine we turned to a specimen of the world's largest living organism, the Giant sequoia or redwood. A magnificent tree with worthless timber. Originally described by the patriotic British as *Wellingtonia gigantea* in 1853 a year after the Duke of Wellington's death, the name reclaimed by America (it was their tree) as *Sequoiadendron giganteum* honouring the half caste son of an English trader and a Cherokee squaw who, fascinated by the talking leaves the settlers wrote back home, developed an alphabet for the Cherokee language. The red wood was a must have for country estates at that time, Country Life in 1876 advertised

a BOGOF, 2 guineas each or a dozen for 12 guineas. There is no trace left of a redwood avenue which stretched from Middleton Boulevard to Lenton Lodge but a plantation of 90 trees remains, the largest in the country.



A 330 year old county champion horse chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum* had a magnificent presence but was rotten to the core. It all depends which side you look. Occasionally Graham was distracted by other trees, an Indian horse chestnut with most striking flowers. The native wild cherry is one of our most attractive trees but the double form has a spikier shape. *Prunus avium 'Plena'* flowers beautifully (we were too late) but rarely produces fruit. How could we not take a moment out for the red deer stags so close that we could almost stroke them?

Back in the fold on the North Bank, one of Graham's favourite spots, a mini-arboretum starting with Atlas *Cedrus atlantica f glauca* and Deodar *Cedrus deodara* cedars, a favourite of Capability Brown. They are very hardy and tolerate pollution. The deodar branches droop, the larger needles are in sprays like larch. The upright Atlas so beautifully blue but a giant surprise, totally unsuitable for most gardens.

An umbrella with a skirt of dead branches is a classic example of pin oak which shows good autumn colour. Japanese rowan *Sorbus commixta* with white plates of flowers, is a bonfire in autumn and we also saw an unusually robust specimen of a variegated sycamore. A county champion purple beech (likely to implode any time) was followed by a county champion Roble beech *Lophozonia obliqua (formerly nothofagus)*.



MEETING WITH REMARKABLE TREES AT WOLLATON contd

History in the making, the roble beech from the southern hemisphere fits into the English landscape without the alien feel of eucalyptus or monkey puzzle and is part of plans to counter the lethal effects of global warming on our own native trees.

Side by side, two trees were used to compare specimens of English and sessile oak. The crooked English oak supports 500 insect species. The sessile oak has a straight trunk with an umbrella of even branches and does not suffer from spangle or knopper galls. Many twentieth century park trees were sourced

in Poland and Germany but now locally sourced native stock is favoured.

Wollaton Hall was completed in 1588 and at that time a Holm oak *Quercus ilex* was planted which would have been almost the biggest and oldest in Britain, no longer alive, there is still an impressive specimen of the ever-green oak at the gate of the hall gardens. And here we stopped, as this would be a whole new story of exciting trees brought back to Britain by the great plant explorers. Marion Bryce 9 June 2015

LENS MEETS THE GODDESS WELEDA

Mon July 6, Weleda Organic Biodynamic Medicinal Herb Gardens (13 acres) + nature reserve with meadow, pond and woodland. Uneven ground, after rain wear boots or strong shoes.

NOTE: BOOK IN ADVANCE. There is a charge of £5 per person & we will each receive a small goody bag + vouchers worth £5 to spend in the Ilkeston shop.

Meet 7pm in car park at the site in Shipley. Turn left at sign for 'The Field' just before garden centre on B6007, Ilkeston – Heanor Road. Weleda's land is the first gateway/track on left after the first bungalow once you've left the B6007. Car park small so please share cars wherever possible.

Grid ref SK 448 448 Postcode DE75 7JB (Shipley Garden Centre)

Leader Claire Hattersley (Garden Manager)

This was the delayed June 1 meeting which was cancelled due to bad weather.

Welcome to the wacky world of Weleda (say 'wee-leader'). We don't make cloths and mops. We let beautiful flowers grow in our gardens, naturally.

The earth's resources are limited and must be conserved. Weleda is part of a world-wide network of business producing homeopathic medicine, traditional herb lotions and potions and natural cosmetics following Dr Rudolf Steiner's principles of economic, social and environmental responsibility, believing that mind, spirit body are linked holistically to the world. In 1921 his team developed Weleda's first pharmaceutical products following Goethe's whole plant concept and the principle of doctrines which aims to identify and harness properties of appropriate plant parts to stimulate the human body's own healing powers. What make Weleda so special is that the company does all this out of respect, love and responsibility towards nature.

A valerian and hop bordered path leads to a daisied lawn with long, surprisingly formal flower beds, a labelled patchwork of poppies, pansies and purple monkshood. Boundaries are not fixed, plants can wander at will. Common green capsid bugs graze on the occasional aphid – biological control, naturally. Polka dot caterpillars of mullein moth graze on the woolly yellow mullein spires, they will be rehomed at harvest. Weleda has a cure for most complaints. Have you had depression? Salvation in the perforated leaves and yellow starry flowers of St John's wort. The St John's wort leaf beetle is gently ejected from the feast.

Traditional herb lotions and potions and natural cosmetics are made from alcoholic and aqueous extracts. Clare describes the sunshine, the fruity aroma, the merry days when the wild strawberry and nettle ethanol tincture is made. In depth study of the whole plant, the flowers, the leaves, the root, the whole life cycle lead the product formulation and research which never stops.

LENS MEETS WELEDA continued

The sad white petals of chamomile belie the physiological impact of the dried heads which may be used sparingly in a tisane or tincture. The grace of birch trees imparts grace to the human body through leaf tea. White bryony reaches out from a wooden support, the weak stems and leaves lack form and structure compared with a bulky root giving clues to it's potential medicinal properties.

This is a poison garden with black berries of deadly nightshade and white trumpets of thorn apple, tall seed pods of greater celandine and majestic purple spires of monkshood, all base ingredients for homeopathic medicines. Beautiful but aptly named deadly, the many dilutions to the finished preparation mean they are safe to take but can only be prescribed by anthroposcopic medics (look it up).



It is a surprise to see American herbs, the large daisy heads of echinacea, arnica and stark crimson, 'red' clover just coming into flower. These are used to make native American products locally. Weleda grows out of local enthusiasm and commitment to natural principles, hard work and patience.

Reluctantly leaving the flowery beds we enter the calm of a Zen zone. Trees screen a large newt pond with a swirling leaf design cascade. Reeds and rushes and golden sedge please Brian, who had dug the pond many years before. Poison ivy grows in the woods, for harvest, Clare and her three

gardeners don full space suits with breathing apparatus, Stuart's labrador had been treated with Rhus, the old name for Toxicodendron the latin name for poison ivy.

Under the tree canopy a tangle of comfrey and nettles, stacked wooden hives buzzing, bees busily working into the late evening with so much nectar to gather. School children love to learn how to harmonise the bounty of nature. Gravely we contemplate the steaming layers of clover, straw and comfrey, heaps of compost producing organic humus, to be used sparingly as a soil conditioner. No more bonfires, unused branches and stalks are shredded into woodchip piles under the trees, where grass snakes laze in the sun to equilibrate. They lay their rubbery eggs in the heaps of compost where the tiny snakelings are a delight and surprise when turning the compost.

There was no sign of the cowslips in the cowslip meadows leaves buried beneath clover, plantain, yellow rattle and the occasional seeding head of common spotted orchid. A further meadow seeded from toppings is another floriferous heaven. Clare showed how complex a marigold flower is, the composite nature of the flower head with many tiny florets packed together for major impact to attract the pollinating insects, the pinnacle of flower evolution.

Following the principle of biodynamics Weleda sow and reap according to the phase of the moon. Today was a good day for the painstaking harvest of marigold flowers and leaf tips of Thuja. Our guide is the biodynamic calendar. A warm and bright evening we had enjoyed and gentle tears of rain fall on our departure.

Hooray for Brian, Stanton North Lagoon

Mon June 22, Looking for Yellow Bird's Nest and other Rarities, a wild flower walk on good paths.

Meet 7pm at Straw's Bridge car park on A609, Ilkeston – West Hallam road.

Grid ref SK 453 413 Postcode DE7 5FG

Move to Stanton North Lagoon on Merlin Way SK 474 392

Leader Brian Gough



HOORAY FOR BRIAN PHOTO BY ADY ORRELL

Having accepted by now that summer will not arrive this year, we met Brian under a black cloud at Straws Bridge. He said he was cursed, every walk he has led this year has been rained off but tonight more bad news, the epi-parasitic yellow bird's nest had not even appeared at it's usual site, unfazed, he suggested a change of venue.

In convoy we drove through Quarry Hill Industrial Estate, down Merlin way, to the hawthorn screened nature reserve at Stanton Lagoon. Brian's luck had changed, the sun cowed the retreating black clouds and the evening set fair. Stanton North Lagoon is

one of Erewash Borough Council's informal open spaces. It does not have Local Nature Reserve status, there is no leaflet for the site. The site was formed in 1994, it contains 2 balancing ponds which hold water when the Nutbrook floods, the Groundwork Trust planted the hedge. It is close to Merlin House, which houses Erewash Borough Council's Operational Services.

We squeezed through the central hedge portal and a floral delight entranced from that moment. The yellow umbels of wild parsnip with perforate St John's Wort and pink centaury covered the raised bank of the footpath together with a delicate sprinkling of bee orchids. We counted over 100 pale green spikes with clinging bee forms in three main patches of more disturbed soil. Red and white campion grew with teasel and nettle in developing areas of bramble, hawthorn and blackthorn scrub. Should we bring back the motorbikes we debated? They do such a great job of conservation churning up the earth for floral reseeding, but riding without heed for others, presenting real danger. Their exclusion has resulted in scrub intrusion, blackthorn blocking off the external circuit of the reserve. Purple and pale pink spikes of common spotted and southern marsh orchids plus every hybrid phenotype between the two pushed through leafy allsorts in the central marsh which was choked with reedmace. Braving wet feet we pushed past pink patches of reed canary grass and red drifts of ragged robin, square stemmed St. John's Wort and the leaves of Greater birdsfoot trefoil *Lotus pedunculatus*. To Brian's obvious delight Christine discovered meadow rue *Thalictrum flavum*, a rare find in Derbyshire. Topped with spheres of cream coloured fuzz, it lurked under a bush of goat willow, which is competing with crack willow to take over the site. Encouraged by our enthusiasm Brian walked off piste, entering the Stanton Ironworks site where wide floral pathways curved between alder and aspen. Yellow drifts of birdsfoot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, blue fleabane, and yellow wort, specials amongst the amazing variety of flowers on the site. Hooray for Brian! We knew this was a special flowery treat to be savoured, a frustration of delight sandwiched in time between the inexorable succession of nature and proposed housing development for the old industrial site.



**MEADOW RUE
STANTON LAGOON
MARION BRYCE**

CHASING UNICORNS AT CANNOCK

Sat Jul 11, Cannock Chase – a fascinating area with boggy ecosystems and the possibility of sundews, wood horse-tail....

Park at Boulderstone between Brocton and Pye Green. Lunch/toilets at visitor centre at SK 004 154. After lunch more heathland is available to discover if you wish.

Meet Grid ref SJ 980 183

Leader David Gibbons

I eat my sandwiches and gaze into the peaty water with it's swirled film of pink pollen and reflect on our day at Cannock Chase. The dragonflies are still on patrol, the bright blue common hawkers which never settle and the ever obliging 4 spotted chaser. This morning I had seen the large red damsel fly courting and more blue needles with LENS. It was a sunny pleasure eating plump purple bilberries, the red cow berries not yet ripe so it would be a trip to IKEA for a taste of Lingonberry jam.



Starting at a Scottish glacial erratic seated on French pebbles, we had a glimpse of recent history World War camps obliterated by brief time, only the drainage channels remain. We set out to enjoy willowy moorland in the Cherwell Valley but there was a surprising refusal at the first fence 'We weren't told to wear Wellingtons'. Our leader, David, reluctantly passed by the cotton grassed basin bog, for consolation dipped his net into this very pond, a dragonfly paradise



kept clear to provide water for fire defence with a collar of soft rush and sedges black and star, 'Rushes are round but sedges have edges'. One great crested newt larva and one phantom midge larva a paltry but high class haul. 'The good news you've got the pond all to yourself, the bad news, there is nothing to eat but peat'.

We now walk through the alder clad Oldacre valley, a rare landscape woven with tapestry shades: Blue green heather not yet in flower, purple moor grass, mat grass, wavy hair grass and bracken. The rhythm of a well walked route interrupted by sudden turns to feast our eyes on marsh fern and what else? We are desperately seeking sundew in a fenced Blanket bog with great hummocks of paniculate sedge, but the sphagnum is dry, 'white moss', without the deer graze needed to keep the sundew and butterwort. There is a lot of marsh thistle, greater birds foot trefoil, common bedstraw and some attractive orchids which may have Heath spotted ancestry also a micromoth with a large probos-

CHASING UNICORNS AT CANNOCK contd

-cis, *Pleurota bicostella*. We march on past Highland colours alien to our native lowland. High and dry, grey green heather in bud, fighting back pea green bracken, pushing through tall stems, breathe in that distinctive bracken aroma. Dancing never still, flesh coloured, red stemmed wavy hair grass coats the hill side punctuated by splashes of bright pink bell heather and flushed pale pink cross leaved heath 'bog heather' in damp hollows. Ringlets and small Heath butterflies tease in the breeze.

A sharp left turn and hidden under the sessile oak canopy are the delicate branched fronds of wood horsetail and I snap a picture wing fly, *Dictya umbrarum*, characteristic of heathland. Dawdle to admire the slender St Johns Wort, tormentil and heath bedstraw. We are high on a ridge viewing past the Wreakin and Long Mynd of Shropshire to the dark mountains of Mid-Wales. Scanning the unfolding chase with clear lines of view to a browsed treeline I determine to see the famous fallow deer of Cannock. This mythical beast is my unicorn. Despite many visits to Cannock in every season of childhood I never saw the deer, I so wanted to see the large eyes and white spotted chestnut coat on gawky legs, Bambi. Disappointed at the busy Visitor Centre as the deer had melted into the landscape, but local walkers are encouraging, 'Try the gate at Brocton, 2 fawns with spotted coats are hiding in the grass', 'Look through the trees, four deer just passed this way'. Today I have been lucky, 2 wonderful old ladies draw up nearby with a large bag of peanuts. Did you know that deer love peanuts? Just keep quiet and stand very still and they will come to you.



Marion Bryce 18 July 2015

AN EVENING OF FRAGRANT DELIGHT

Mon Jul 27, Wilford Clay Pits – small reserve, part SSSI, with varied habitats including ponds. Flowers include fragrant & other orchids.

The gentle walk is on good terrain, slightly hilly in places, with two stiles.

Meet 7pm at reserve entrance on Landmere Lane, next to Apple Tree Pub. From Wilford Lane turn onto Ruddington Lane, B680, then turn left just before going under the A52 bridge onto Landmere Lane. Park on roadside or in pub car park.

Grid ref SK 569 354 Nearby postcode NG11 6ND

Leader Chris Kennedy

An Evening of Fragrant Delight

A day of glowering clouds slipped into an unpromising dark evening as we met Chris Kennedy Reserve Manager. Chris enthusiastically and knowledgeably manages 20 of the 80 Notts Wildlife Trust Nature Reserves. He said nature reserve management follows the opposite principles to gardening, the main focus is to depauperate the soil, to discourage rank vegetation, reducing competition and giving our native wildflowers space to grow.

We entered the former claypits at the Appletree entrance and first looked at grassland which has developed on the mineral soils of the pit slopes. One side of the path had low grasses with bare patches and a lot of the strange inflated seedheads of yellow rattle to rattle, forbs* such as birds-foot trefoil and fairy flax, ribbed melilot, eyebright and



AN EVENING OF FRAGRANT DELIGHT contd

spiny rest harrow delighted the eye. The shadier side had longer grass with an underlay of frothy yellow ladies bedstraw, tall wedgewood discs of field scabious supporting some 'frozen' white tailed bees, champagne pink hemp agrimony and codlins and cream stands of great hairy willow herb. Chris made us aware of the value of grasses as butterfly host plants. We had a close look at crested dogstail, quaking grass, vernal grass and catstail and thug grasses such as false oat grass and cocksfoot grass. The grassland is mowed selectively with regard to succession of species. We weren't expecting to see any butterflies but we did see small skippers and a narrow bordered 5 spot burnet.

Trees in the surrounding woodland were ash, sycamore, white beam, silver birch and various species of willow including eared willow *Salix aurita* and creeping willow *Salix repens*, rare in Nottinghamshire. Chris is on the alert for ash dieback which has been found at Newark. On the other hand the trees are invasive and he relies on an army of volunteers to help preserve the diverse habitats.

We paused to look at one of the few remaining areas of open water surrounded by grey club-rush *Scirpus tabernaemontani*, hard rush and the ever encroaching bulrush *Typha latifolia*. The woodland had been cleared back and the colours of the wildflowers were stunning; pink, yellow, mauve and maroon, ragged robin, greater birds foot trefoil, great burnet and tufted vetch were flowering, characteristic of wet lowland meadows which are now so uncommon.

The upper pit slopes were mainly dry although occasional springs issue from skerry bands in the mudstone resulting in landslips on the steep slopes (good for bee orchids). A variety of herbs including wild carrot with it's up curved umbrella of tiny white flowers, always with a single maroon flower in the centre. Why? Could it be a bee guide? Bee orchids finished by now, yellow-wort an alkaline indicator plant with perfoliate leaves and the delightfully delicate pink centaury grow. Also spotted hawkweed, mouse-ear hawkweed and, thanks to the surrounding gardens, 8 different species of cotoneaster.

Wilford Claypits contains one of the best remaining areas of base rich marsh in Nottinghamshire and was declared a nature reserve in 1981. We entered the SSSI to see the fragrant orchids we had been waiting for, these were rare marsh fragrant orchids *Gymnadenia densiflora* a scarce orchid confined to alkaline fens. One mauve floret was picked to look at the form of the flower. The lip is wider than long with large side lobes with distinct shoulders, and the long, narrow wings are held horizontally. Several people knelt in flower worship. In the damp still air we were intoxicated with the wonderful sweet fragrance. Oh happiness!



We didn't want to leave but Chris had another area of rare alkaline fen habitat to show us fed by pure water from a natural spring. We splashed through glaucous spikes of hard rush, interspersed with the miniature mace heads of common yellow sedge *Carex demissa*, towards the shocking pink spikes of purple loosestrife. there were more fragrant orchid spikes and seedheads of southern marsh orchid, common spotted orchid

and the tall hybrid *D grandis*. The fen was alive with jumping insects, grasshoppers, common and lesser marsh, and hundreds of springing and flipping turquoise marsh leafhoppers *Cicadella viridis*. Froglets and toadlets joined in the party and we all thought we had enjoyed a jolly good evening out.

WHISTLEWOOD WELCOMES LENS

Mon Aug 10 Whistlewood Common, Melbourne – an exciting community venture. A small group bought an arable field, which they are developing using permaculture principles, which stress natural methods and biodiversity for maximum socio/environmental/economic benefits.

Meet 7pm on the Common site if dry enough, otherwise park over the road at Dovesite Business Park. Take the Ticknall road out of Melbourne. After leaving the B587 Whistlewood Common is quickly on your right.

Grid ref SK372 247 Nearest postcode DE73 8HS

Leader Graham Truscott

We left Long Eaton under a black cloud and tractored past haymakers and harvesters bathed in golden yellow sunshine, to Whistle Wood Common

Graham, Clare and Christian welcomed us to a pow wow and we sat on cut logs around hungry wood stoves with flames licking the sides of 2 merrily bubbling kettles seated on top.



We were introduced to the concept of permaculture and sustainability, collective responsibility towards future generations, community involvement and, as they proudly unfurled a meticulously drawn chart we saw the future vision for Whistlewood Common. Not just preaching to the converted, everyone is invited to join in, schools are involved in projects and demonstration gardens, local wood bodgers are building an education centre with plans for an octagonal performance space and a thatched roundhouse to be funded by grants and another share issue. Our

eyes feasted on honeyed homemade banana and nut cake.

The historic common land was identified as a suitable site for Permaculture as botanical doctors Chris and Henry Wilkins (well known vegetable stall holders on Long Eaton market) were retiring. After the purchase of the land in 2013 by 150 shareholders matched by a grant from the National Forest, the big works started by diverting a field drain into a swale, a ditch dug around the contour to prevent run off, to catch water to percolate into the ground.

Then all hands on deck, regular Saturday work parties, open to all, planting a forest garden, 3000 mixed fruit and other trees such as Italian alder and currant bushes planted in a hedge of fruitfulness for all to share.

Walking around the arid terracotta prairie coated with tough Timothy grass taller than the brave fruit trees, cherry, walnut, apple, elder clinging to the clay, the vision held. It was quite difficult to push through the tough, dry grass stems to the 4 shallow specially constructed amphibian ponds in the field corner, all dry. The plan is good, reality is. Hard.



A splash of colour on a buff canvas pink yarrow, poppies, corn marigold, chamomile, and larkspur. This oasis in the desert was a wildflower garden created by mechanically removing a meter of topsoil, getting rid of the leathery Timothy and the over abundance of nitrogen, the scything challenge a measure of the task ahead. Seated once more in front of the yurt we admired the fine

view to the Oxford-Derby Ridgeway and St Brides, possibly the oldest building in Derbyshire. We ate the cake thoughtfully. Was this peace and love in the setting sun? We know the sixties are a distant dream and this is a business aiming to be sustainable in environmental and economic terms.

I SAW THREE SHIPS WITH LENS

Sat Aug 29 Birchen Edge – a circular walk (5 miles) in heather season with fine views, a variety of antiquities and different types of woodland. The walk is strenuous with steep, rocky & uneven ground. Bring a packed lunch.

Meet 10.30am at car park close to The Robin Hood Inn, just outside Baslow, on the Chesterfield Road (A619).

There is a charge (NT & RSPB members free).

DO NOT PARK AT INN.

Grid ref SK 280 722 Nearest postcode DE45 1PU

Leader s Marion Bryce and Adrian Orrell



Our day started at Aldi where we stocked up with salad snacks for our healthy heather expedition. A smooth drive up to Baslow where we met LENS at the Birchen Edge car park. One last drink of coffee and off we set to the stony uphill track to the edge.

Lime green trefoil leaves of wood-sorrel are an ancient woodland indicator species, have you tasted them? The cracked corky tiles on the trunks of dusky birch invite inspection. Were all the leaves diamond shaped? Why weren't the twigs hairy?

Was the dancing

leaf canopy delicate and fine and dusky?

The white yarrow flowers of sneezewort stood tall in a wet flash with marsh thistle. Then we saw the yellow pea flowers and the birdclaw seeds of greater birdsfoot trefoil. Tiny blue flowers and trailing stems were creeping forget-me-not, *Myosotis secunda* and from the buttercup family, lesser spearwort sprawled amongst soft and jointed rush. Dark green pennies scattered liberally low around were the nasturtium-like leaves of marsh pennywort. Eagerly we looked forward to our next boggy patch but helmeted figures clinking up the trail beguiled our youngest member who merrily scampered to join the party of rock climbers, fortunately he had taken the walkie talkie with him.



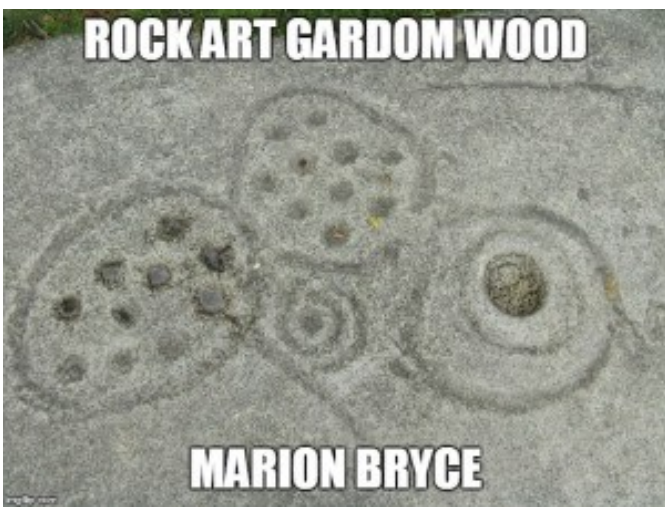
More treasure! Marsh violet, carnation sedge, bog stitchwort, heath woodrush and compact rush with white moth pupae projecting from the brown florescence like petals. Sensory immersion in viridian bracken then back to the fine bents and wavy hair grass spangled with gold Maltese crosses of tormentil by the trodden path.

Are you receiving me? Our youngster makes contact, 'Meet you at Nelson's monument'. A short push up the steep path and scramble over the gritstone edge and we have reached purple heaven.

I SAW THREE SHIPS WITH LENS contd

We are now puffing perfumed pink pollen, heather or ling, *Calluna vulgaris*. Three ships arrest us, Victory, Defiant and Soverin and in their massive rocky shelter we find the missing boys, eating. Wind blowing our hair we smile for the group photo, touch history at the 1805 sandstone monument to Admiral Lord Nelson and marvel at the scene. Panoramic viewing unwound to Curbar edge and Chatsworth's Jubilee Woodland, Eagle Rock on Baslow edge with Wellington's monument hidden behind. Just before we descend to Gardom Wood Adrian spots his FIRST EVER common lizard in a tuft of purple moor grass, smooth black speckled olive skin, pale pink flushed belly gliding through grass stems.

The wood is cool and swallows our clamour, gravely our eyes understand a low table rock art form of cup and pin, rough to our touch and strangely warm. Shrug off that weird feeling and look for the season stone, camouflaged grey and leaning among the grey upright birch trunks. On midsummer day no shadow is cast.



Time for lunch, again, seated on a warm weathered log photographing a hyperactive kidney spot ladybird.



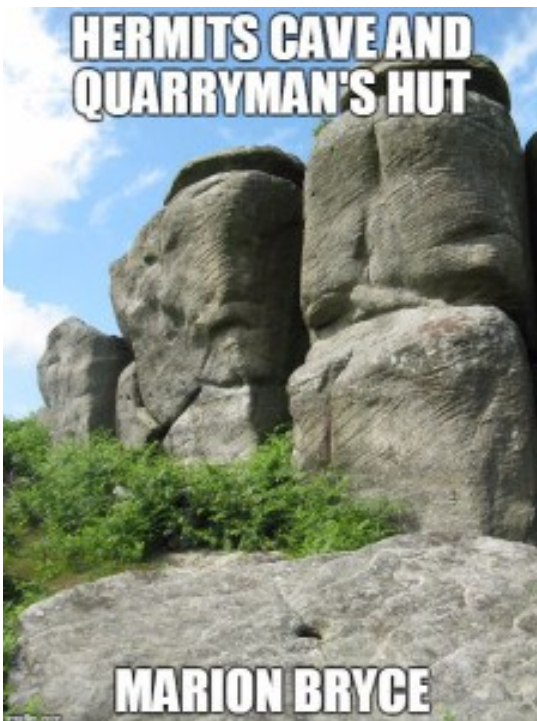
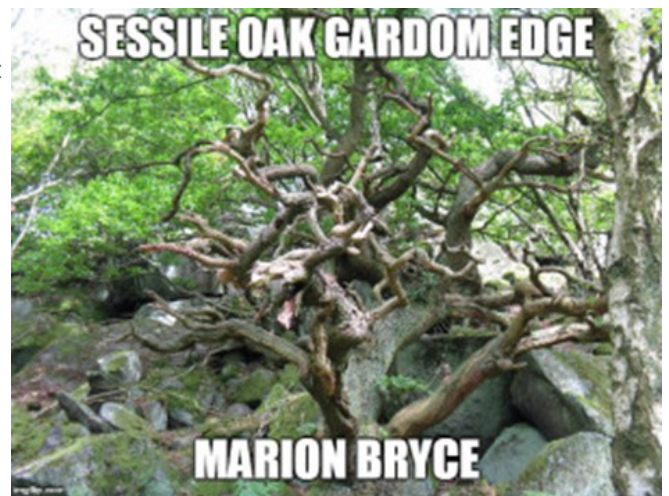
Walking to the wall our muted feet sink in soft cushions of the brightest green, *Polytrichum commune*, common hair cap moss sending up brown spore smoke signals. On Gardom Edge, ill formed grindstones and troughs are abandoned by a grassy incline. An orange tip butterfly is a bright jewel on fern fronds and a huge black and bristly yellow eyed tachinid fly tumbles through the sward.

I SAW THREE SHIPS WITH LENS contd
Down a sandy track we search for tiger beetles.

It is dark below the precipitous boundary and birch crowds between gritstone boulders, screening an ancient forge and furnace with quenching pits. Clambering over moss covered stones, among twisted oak grotesques we meet the king of the forest, a centuries old sessile oak.

Heading home, a cross marks the spot of a hermits cave, with a hole for the chimney.

Of the old quarryman's cottage nothing remains but shaft holes in the steep rock face and a heap of large rectangular shaped gritstone bricks. Stone tiles have tumbled off the roof of White Moor Farm leaving gaping holes, history erased by time and weather.



Are you receiving me? Are you receiving me? Radio silence. Bathed in sunshine we await the children coming sitting on a root over rock amongst harebells of palest blue and pink foxglove spikes. In the distance, are 3 ships on the horizon, Victory, Defiant and Soverin.

Marion Bryce 29 August 2015

**A sample of the 110 new trees to
be planted at West Park in
Autumn 2015
Jaimey Richards
Tree Officer
Erewash Borough Council**



The Friends of West Park

Contact: Jane Gordon11@btinternet.com

Next meeting: Wednesday December 2nd, 7.00pm at the Wilsthorpe Tavern, Long Eaton NG10 3LJ

Creeping Plants

White comfrey *Symphytum album* is listed in garden plant catalogues as an 'All round tough plant suitable for problem areas'

It is spreading along the River Erewash at Toton, shortly to be in Long Eaton, Derbyshire and also spreading down The City at Risley, both from original garden plantings!

There is a large patch of creeping comfrey *Symphytum grandiflorum* spreading at St Chad's Water in Draycott.

LENS keeps records of wild-flower surveys in the local area and has contributed to the new Derbyshire Flora.

If you have a favourite wild-flower area you would like us to survey or have found an unusual plant you would like to identify, e-mail, or contact a member of the LENS committee.



White comfrey *Symphytum album*

Toton 13 April 2015

Photo credit Marion Bryce

Reptiles

Slow worms were on the menu when Ady and Marion of LENS attended a Reptile Training course in Lea, at the end of April. Chris Monk of Derbyshire Amphibian and Reptile Group introduced the 15 native UK species.

Survey mats had been set out in Lea Woods and we went into the field to learn the signs and most likely sites to find reptiles. Although we didn't find any slow worms on the day on a subsequent visit slow worms were present. Let us know if you have seen a lizard or a snake so that the habitat

can be conserved as part of any development plans. Reports in the local area have been from the Erewash Canal, Lock Lane Ash Tip, the railway line network and land by the railway. Elvaston Castle grounds have a successful grass snake incubation area.

Erewash Borough Council Enforcement officers are currently investigating disturbance of a known site at Stanton Ironworks.



Common lizard and slow worm under survey mat 2014

Photo credit Marion Bryce

Bee Transects

The Bumble Bee Conservation Trust BCT are setting up a nationwide programme of bee transects along similar lines to the Butterfly Transects.

These will give quantitative and qualitative measures which will be used to make an economic argument to preserve wildflower areas for bees

They are such important pollinators that we just can't survive without them.

Bees start flying early in the year and volunteers must learn not only to recognise different species but also whether they are queen, drone or worker.

The 2014 National Bee Pollination strategy advises- Let lawns grow and flower, plant pollinator friendly trees and leave piles of logs to create nesting sites to replace the wildflower rich farm grasslands that have reduced by 97% since the 1930s.



Richard Comont BCT admires DWT's bee hotel

14 April 2015 Marion Bryce



LENS Long Eaton Natural History Society

CONTACTS

Alan Heath 0115 9733766
Lensnaturalhistory@gmail.com

Future Meetings

- 14th September 'A Tale of Dragons and Damsels' Christopher Hollis
- 12th October AGM/Member's Night
- 9th November 'Gravel Pits - a Haven for Birds' Debbie Court
- 14th December Quiz/Social

2016

- 11th January ' Now that's Scilly!' Nigel Slater
- 8th February 'A Botanist in Jersey' Kenneth Balkow
- 14th March 'Experimenting with a new Camera' Andy Christian

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.

See website www.lensweb.wordpress.com



Thanks to all contributors and Joan Breakwell, Ady Orrell, Alan Heath, Derek Brumbill and Marion Bryce, for photographs used in this bulletin. Send articles and photographs to Lensnaturalhistory@gmail.com



The grass cutting at Trowell Marsh was not up to standard but mitigation finance is available for the Nature Reserve and will be used to for hedge laying, biannual meadow scything and scrub clearance in 2016. Derbyshire Wildlife Trust will advise and finance the conservation work which will be carried out by Erewash Borough Council Operations Team.

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,

LENS would especially like to thank Roland Hosker and Derbyshire County Council for sponsoring the new printer