

## L E N S B U L L E T I N

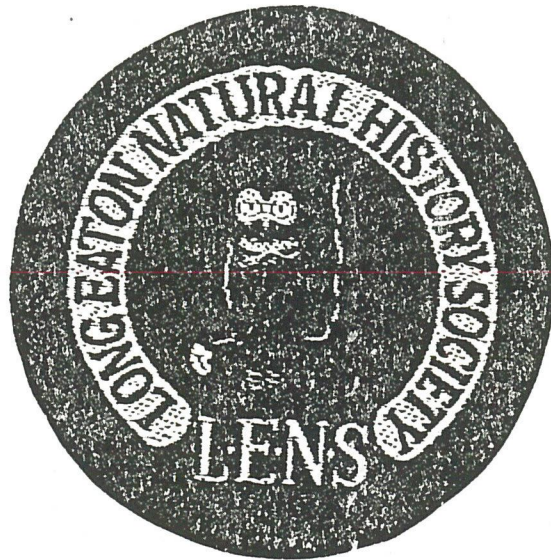
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Issued for Members and Friends of the

LONG EATON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

AUTUMN 1987

CHAIRMAN	:	GEORGE SMITH
SECRETARY	:	MARION SMITH
MEETINGS ORG.	:	KAREN BIDGOOD
TREASURER	:	SANDRA SLADE



*10th. Anniversary Edition*

## CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

In introducing, probably for the last time, the latest bulletin, I must pay tribute to those who have worked so hard to achieve its success. Particularly I must mention Judy Langford who was our first recorder and editor and Elaine Prior who arranged publication in the early days. Latterly the tasks have been taken on most successfully by Stan Eggleshaw and Fay Blackburn but obviously their efforts would be in vain but for the contributions of so many LENS members.

Of these I must single out Geoff Battershall who has been a prolific contributor and all his work being meticulously presented. Sadly his contributions will now come to an end as he has established a status that many aspire but few achieve, that of early retirement to the coast. Geoff and Renee will be sorely missed but I am sure we will all wish them well and many happy days seeking and photographing wild life.

George Smith

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I should also like to extend my thanks to Geoff for his contributions to the Bulletin and as stated by George these were always meticulously presented, making my task easier.

I was disappointed to learn that Geoff was leaving after he 'awakened' an interest in plants in John and myself following the visit to Shining Cliff Woods at Ambergate. Hope our other 'experts' in LENS will guide us through.

The contributions in this Bulletin span a considerable time gap and I have endeavoured to keep the items in date order.

Fay Blackburn

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It was interesting to note on a recent trip to France the following mushrooms were on sale at an ordinary supermarket:-

Cocktail sylvestre au naturel,

Ingredients: Boletus luteus, Tricholoma, terreum et equestres, Pleurotus ostreatus, Lactarius deliciosus.  
also available were preserved morels, sparassis crispa, chanterelles, oyster mushrooms, Boletus edulis and various other fungi.

Marion Smith

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### November meetings

2nd Mr David Bodger "An ecologist in Australia"  
9th Mr Malcolm Hopton "British Bats"  
23rd Mr John Coales "Flowers of the Burren"

## HORACE

At the beginning of August my daughter Catherine brought home Horace, a baby hedgehog. His flesh showed through sparse hairs, looking like someone going thin on top, he was about 3" long, weighed approximately 3 ounces, and was so weak and ill that, like rats deserting a sinking ship, all his fleas had left him.....but he had some delouser to be on the safe side!!

Catherine set up a box beside her bed, putting an electric pad in the bottom and wrapping him in towels for warmth. Then she gathered together a feeding syringe, vitamin fortified lactol and a variety of other aids to liquid nourishment and we prepared for a period of more or less constant feeding in the daytime but during the night I heard the alarm going off every two hours but was able to ignore it myself!!

After about ten days he started feeding himself and night bottles ceased. He was still in the bedroom and still sleeping on the heated pad, the cage was just to prevent any cats and dogs getting at the food left for his midnight feasts. There was also a small tray of garden soil to teach him to look for grubs etc. and not as a litter tray as one optimistic visitor thought! Under this treatment he grew apace and his spines developed so that a glove was needed to pick him up.

When we had a warm spell of weather in September he was moved out into the rabbit shed and there he prepared to spend the winter, sleeping in an upturned basket of hay, waking occasionally to venture out for food which we always left handy. At the beginning of November he was very fat and weighed 2¼ lbs.

He was left to sleep there, finally going into hibernation around Christmas, until the temperature dropped in January when he was moved into the spare room. He continued to sleep there, waking on the last night of February. He then weighed just over 2lbs and started to eat immediately. He will stay in the shed until Spring proper finally comes and will then be reintroduced into the garden.

This is a happy ending and one we rejoice in, unlike poor little 'Oddie' brought in during October, very small and very sweet but suffering from a bang on the head and goodness knows what else. In spite of the medicaments the PDSA could provide and the loving care bestowed on him by Catherine his breathing remained laboured and wheezing and after five days he just died in his sleep, mourned by all the family as though he had been a long-time much loved pet.

C & K Harrison

P.S. 9th April - After two or three nights of exploration Horace did not return to his box this morning. We must accept he has reached independence. If you happen to see an outsize hedgehog in the region of Risley you will know it is Horace. K.H.

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A hedgehog was brought into the vets where my daughter works, it had been caught-up in some cricket nets, and as Kitty points out, in spite of all the medicines and care that are available, you are not always successful in rearing these young hedgehogs, as happened in this instance also.

Fay Blackburn

## WINTER PROGRAMME - JANUARY/MARCH 1987

The subject of our first meeting after the Christmas break on 5th Jan. was 'Moths of the Long Eaton Area' given by Mr T Duro and Mr A Braddock. We saw some excellent slides together with the nets and moth traps that are used to capture the moths on the night forays on Lock Lane Tip, which we learned is one of the best sites in the area where many unusual species have been recorded. Our speakers agreed to take a party of members on one of their expeditions during the summer.

On 26th January, we held a 'Members' Evening' when June Crosby gave an illustrated talk about some of the birds and scenery she had seen on a recent trip to visit her daughter in Canada. After coffee, Clive took us with him and Katie on their honeymoon..... However, amid some-facetious remarks, he confined us to seeing only the slides of the nature reserves they visited in East Anglia. He said his ambition was to visit every single one and he apparently succeeded. When questioned, Katie said "No comment." The evening was rounded off by Alan Heath organising a practical exercise in identifying the contents of owl pellets and to our great interest a number of gruesome remains appeared. One interesting footnote on this is that Joyce Smith has now apparently become hooked on dissecting owl pellets and at the time of writing is about to mount a complete skeleton she has recovered.

We had a slightly different view of birds on 16th February, when Mr P Stancliffe, a bird ringer, brought slides of numerous birds in the hand, showing features that are not normally apparent, to illustrate his excellent lecture on ringing. As a follow-up to this interesting evening, Mr Stancliffe has kindly agreed to lead a visit to Attenborough in the Spring.

Mammals was Mr K Taylor's subject on 2nd March, and we were treated to some superb slides of badgers, foxes etc., which must have required considerable time and patience to obtain. After the interval, Mr Taylor concentrated on deer, on which he is obviously an expert and explained the life style of the various species and some of the terminology used to describe the antlers.

On 16th March, Mr S Holmes took us on a photographic tour of the Scilly Isles, including some excellent aerial shots of the scenery. Slides of some of the birds to be seen there indicated how tame they seem to be, allowing one to get very close. This was an evening for all tastes, as we also saw lots of wild flowers and the very colourful gardens with their many sub-tropical plants, not forgetting the bulb fields which provide one of the main crops of the islands. A number of members will no doubt be making a mental note to visit the Scilly Isles in future.

Our final meeting on 23rd March was again on birds and was presented by Mr J Dawes. The first half was on bird song, when Mr Dawes' colleague played recordings of bird calls and song which he has made over a period of 25 years. After coffee, Mr Dawes showed his slides on 'Birds of the British Isles' accompanied by a recorded commentary and background of bird calls. This was a presentation of professional quality which in view of the many rare species included, must have involved many years of patient work and considerable travelling in its compilation.

To summarize, we enjoyed yet another excellent series of winter evenings, consisting of a good variety of subjects, expertly presented and superbly illustrated, and our thanks go to all our speakers for the hard work involved in entertaining and educating us by sharing their interests with us.

## RISLEY GREBE WORKING PARTIES

Two working parties were organised on 22nd February and 22nd March 1987 with the object to tidy-up the reserve. Half-a-dozen members turned up for the first one and a large number of fallen branches were collected together and either intertwined along the existing boundary to fill some of the gaps, or placed in two large piles where they will serve as shelter for small animals or nesting sites for birds. As a result of this effort the general appearance of the reserve was much improved.

On the second date, again about the same number of people turned up and apart from some minor tidying up, our main task was to plant about 100 hawthorn whips along the northern boundary line i.e. where a barbed wire fence has been erected to keep out grazing horses. This will, in time, make a reasonable hedgerow and so bring about a worthwhile improvement in habitat. In the Autumn, it will be necessary to plant probably another 50 hawthorn to complete the line on that particular boundary.

By the date of our second visit a good display of snowdrops and daffodils was evident, with an odd celandine and one bulbous corydalis in flower. There were also plenty of ramson and bluebell leaves to indicate a later display of flowers.

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## SUMMER OUTINGS-1987

### 25th April - Walk in Clumber Park Area

Response to this, or first event of the summer programme was disappointingly poor, only four members, in addition to the leaders, turning up. However, the weather was perfect, with cloudless skies, pleasant sunshine and temperature just right for comfortable walking, so the absentees missed a super day out. The route we took was roughly in the shape of a figure eight, the first section being outside the park and taking in Crookford. Along this stretch we found bluebells, violets, wood sorrel, celandines, dead nettle, an unidentified geranium and another unidentified small yellow flower. We stopped for lunch at the cross-over point of the figure eight just inside the park boundary. After lunch we proceeded round the South side of the lake and made our way to the tea-rooms for some welcome refreshment. At this point, three of the party had to leave due to an evening commitment and the remaining three continued round the North side of the lake and so back to the start point, having covered in total about 10 miles. In the course of the day we saw or heard a total of 50 species of bird which are listed below.

Great Crested Grebe.	Great Spotted Woodpecker	Mistle Thrush
Grey Heron	(plus several drumming)	Long-tailed Tit
Mute Swan	Skylark	Coal Tit
Canada Geese (with young)	Swallow	Blue Tit
Mallard	Sand Martin	Great Tit
Tufted Duck	House Martin	Nuthatch
Kestrel	Meadow Pipit	Treecreeper
Partridge	Tree Pipit	Wren
Pheasant	Yellow Wagtail	Yellowhammer
Moorhen	Duncock	Greenfinch
Coot	Blackcap	Chaffinch
Lapwing	Willow Warbler	Goldfinch
Redshank	Chiffchaff	House Sparrow
Stock Dove	Goldcrest	Starling
Woodpigeon	Robin	Jay
Collared Dove	Blackbird	Magpie
Turtle Dove	Song Thrush	Carrion Crow

18th May - Attenborough Nature Reserve

In complete contrast to the first outing, the weather for this one was far from ideal, being very dull with a cold North wind and poor visibility. Nevertheless about 20 members and friends turned up, only to find that Mr Paul Stanniccliffe, who had agreed to lead the walk, was unable to be present due to a business commitment. However, he had arranged for one of the reserve wardens to stand in for him.

A group of ringers were working in the car park catching hirundines in a mist net and we watched them recording, measuring and weighing a swift which had already had a ring on from a previous capture.

During our walk we did not see anything out of the ordinary for that habitat and time of year, noting a number of common tern, swallows, house martins, swifts, grebe, heron, mallard and tufted duck. Chaffinch, robin song thrush, willow and sedge warblers were also heard singing, but obviously the cold and dark evening was not conducive to good birdwatching.

Stan Eggleshaw  
(also items of pages 3/4)

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Trent Lock      June 15th

After some days of showery weather, only eleven LENS members gathered at Trent Lock on the evening of 15th June. We were rewarded by a pleasant walk on a fine but chilly evening. We went first a short distance along the bank of the Trent towards Shardlow and then back and along the canal in the direction of Beeston. Return was across the fields past Fletcher's pond to the lock. 82 species of plant were found, including skullcap and the less common knotted clover. The birds seen included a gracefully acrobatic pair of common terns. We also enjoyed watching a tufted duck at unusually close quarters. It was so immobile that we began to wonder if it was actually sickly rather than merely co-operative to birwatchers.

The traditions of LENS were maintained with a convivial end to the evening in the "Navigation".

Plants seen were :

Acer pseudoplatanus - Sycamore  
Achillea millefolium - Yarrow  
Alisma plantago-aquatica - Water-plantain  
Alliaria petiolata - Garlic Mustard  
Alnus glutinosa - Alder  
Anthoxanthum odoratum - Sweet Vernal-grass  
Anthriscus sylvestris - Cow Parsley  
Arrhenatherum elatior - False Oat-grass  
Artemesia absinthum - Wormwood  
Artemesia vulgaris - Mugwort  
Asplenium trichomanes - Maidenhair Spleenwort  
Bellis perennis - Daisy  
Brassica napus - Rape  
Bromus mollis - Soft-brome  
Bryonia dioica - White Bryony  
Capsella bursa-pastoris - Shepherd's-purse  
Cardamine pratensis - Cuckooflower  
Carex otrubae - False Fox-sedge  
Chaerophyllum temulentum - Rough Chervil  
Cirsium arvense - Creeping Thistle  
Cirsium vulgare - Spear Thistle  
Conium maculatum - Hemlock  
Conopodium majus - Pignut

*Crataegus monogyna* - Hawthorn  
*Cymbalaria muralis* - Ivy-leaved Toadflax  
*Dactylis glomerata* - Cock's-foot  
*Eleocharis palustris* - Common Spike-rush  
*Epilobium hirsutum* - Great Willowherb  
*Equisetum arvense* - Field Horsetail  
*Festuca rubra* - Red Fescue  
*Filipendula ulmaria* - Meadowsweet  
*Fraxinus excelsior* - Ash  
*Galium aparine* - Cleavers  
*Galium palustre* - Common Marsh-bedstraw  
*Geranium molle* - Dove's foot Crane's-bill  
*Hedera helix* - Ivy  
*Heracleum sphondylium* - Hogweed  
*Holcus lanatus* - Yorkshire-fog  
*Hordeum murinum* - Wall Barley  
*Hypochaeris radicata* - Cat's-ear  
*Iris pseudacorus* - Yellow Iris  
*Juncus inflexus* - Hard Rush  
*Lamium album* - White Dead-nettle  
*Leucanthemum vulgare* - Oxe-eye Daisy  
*Lolium perenne* - Perennial Rye-grass  
*Lycopus europaeus* - Gipsywort  
*Malva sylvestris* - Common Mallow  
*Matricaria matricoides* - Pineappleweed  
*Nupha lutea* - Yellow Water-lily  
*Oenanthe crocata* - Hemlock Water-dropwort  
*Papaver rhoeas* - Common Poppy  
*Plantago lanceolata* - Ribwort Plantain  
*Plantago major* - Greater Plantain  
*Poa annua* - Annual Meadow-grass  
*Potentilla anserina* - Silverweed  
*Ranunculus acris* - Meadow Buttercup  
*Ranunculus repens* - Creeping Buttercup  
*Rosa canina* - Dog-rose  
*Rubus fruticosus* - Bramble  
*Rumex hydrolapathum* - Water dock  
*Rumex obtusifolius* - Broad-leaved Dock  
*Sagina procumbens* - Procumbent Pearlwort  
*Salix fragilis* - Crack Willow  
*Sanguisorba officinalis* - Great Burnet  
*Scirpus maritimus* - Sea Club-rush  
*Scutellaria galericulata* - Scullcap  
*Senecio squalidus* - Oxford Ragwort  
*Sisymbrium officinalis* - Hedge Mustard  
*Solanum dulcamara* - Bittersweet  
*Sonchus oleraceus* - Smooth Sow-thistle  
*Sparganium erectum* - Branched Bur-reed  
*Tanacetum vulgare* - Tansy  
*Taraxacum officinale* - Common Dandelion  
*Trifolium dubium* - Lesser Hop-trefoil  
*Trifolium pratense* - Red Clover  
*Trifolium repens* - White Clover  
*Trifolium striatum* - Knotted Clover  
*Tripleurospermum maritimum* - Scentless Mayweed  
*Trisetum flavescens* - Yellow Oat-grass  
*Urtica dioica* - Common Nettle  
*Valeriana officinalis* - Common Valerian  
*Vicia sativa* - Common Vetch

GEOFF BATTERSHALL

Shining Cliff Wood    June 29th

On the evening of Monday 29th June some 14 LENS members gathered at the Hurt Arms car park, Ambergate for a walk in Shining Cliff Wood. Lowering Clouds threatened, but the evening remained dry and pleasant. The paths were muddy in part following recent rain, but quite passable. We walked gently uphill to the small reservoir, where the rare, delicate Wood Horsetail was found. The return journey took us past the wireworks where mysterious sights and sounds were observed. The Garden Solomon's-seal was still flourishing nearby. 111 plants were recorded. Birds were heard rather than seen, wrens being particularly evident as well as blackbird and willow warbler. Wood ants were active and so were the mosquitoes.

The evening finished in the Hurt Arms where we celebrated the fact that dedicated "birder" Tony Maags can now unhesitatingly identify Hedge Woundwort.

Plants seen were:

Acer pseudoplatanus - Sycamore  
Achillea millefolium - Yarrow  
Alliaria petraea - Garlic Mustard  
Alnus glutinosa - Alder  
Arctium minus - Lesser Burdock  
Arrhenatherum elatior - False Oat-grass  
Artemisia vulgaris - Mugwort  
Asplenium ruta-muraria - Wall-rue  
Atriplex prostrata - Spear-leaved Orache  
Bellis perennis - Daisy  
Betula pendula - Silver Birch  
Brachypodium sylvaticum - False Brome  
Brassica napus - Rape  
Cardamine flexuosa - Wavy Bitter-cress  
Cardamine hirsuta - Hairy Bitter-cress  
Castanea sativa - Sweet Chestnut  
Chaerophyllum temulentum - Rough Chervil  
Chrysoplegium oppositifolium - Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage  
Cirsium arvense - Creeping Thistle  
Cirsium palustre - Marsh Thistle  
Cirsium vulgare - Spear Thistle  
Corydalis claviculata - Climbing Corydalis  
Corylus avellana - Hazel  
Crataegus monogyna - Hawthorn  
Cymbalaria muralis - Ivy-leaved Toadflax  
Dactylis glomerata - Cock's-foot  
Deschampsia caespitosa - Tufted Hair-grass  
Deschampsia flexuosa - Wavy Hair-grass  
Digitalis purpurea - Foxglove  
Dryopteris dilatata - Broad Buckler-fern  
Dryopteris filix-mas - Male-fern  
Elymus repens - Common Couch  
Epilobium angustifolium - Rosebay Willowherb  
Epilobium montanum - Broad-leaved Willowherb  
Equisetum sylvaticum - Wood Horsetail  
Eupatorium cannabinum - Hemp-agrimony  
Fagus sylvatica - Beech  
Fraxinus excelsior - Ash  
Galeopsis tetrahit - Common Hemp-nettle  
Galium aparine - Cleavers  
Galium saxatile - Heath bedstraw  
Geranium lucidum - Shining Cranesbill  
Geranium pratense - Meadow Cranesbill  
Geum urbanum - Wood Avens  
Glechoma hederacea - Ground Ivy  
Hedera helix - Ivy  
Heracleum sphondylium - Hogweed  
Hesperis matronalis - Dame's Violet



*Holcus lanatus* - Yorkshire-fog  
*Holcus mollis* - Creeping Soft-grass  
*Hyacinthoides non-scriptus* - Bluebell  
*Ilex aquifolium* - Holly  
*Impatiens glandulifera* - Indian Balsam  
*Juncus effusus* - Soft Rush  
*Lamium album* - White Dead-nettle  
*Lapsana communis* - Nipplewort  
*Larix decidua* - European Larch  
*Lathyrus pratensis* - Meadow Vetchling  
*Lolium perenne* - Perennial Rye-grass  
*Lonicera periclymenum* - Honeysuckle  
*Lysimachia nemorum* - Yellow Pimpernel  
*Mecanopsis cambrica* - Welsh Poppy  
*Melica uniflora* - Wood Melick  
*Myosotis sylvatica* - Wood Forget-me-not  
*Myrrhis odorata* - Sweet Cicely  
*Oxalis acetosella* - Wood-sorrel  
*Petasites hybridus* - Butterbur  
*Plantago major* - Greater Plantain  
*Poa annua* - Annual Meadow-grass  
*Poa trivialis* - Rough Meadow-grass  
*Polygonatum multiflorum* X *odoratum* - Garden Solomon's-seal  
*Polygonum aviculare* - Knotgrass  
*Polygonum hydropiper* - Water-pepper  
*Potentilla anserina* - Silverweed  
*Pteridium aquilinum* - Bracken  
*Quercus robur* - Pedunculate Oak  
*Ranunculus repens* - Creeping Buttercup  
*Rhododendron ponticum* - Rhododendron  
*Rosa arvensis* - Field-rose  
*Rosa canina* - Dog-rose  
*Rubus fruticosus* - Bramble  
*Rubus idaeus* - Raspberry  
*Rumex conglomeratus* - Clustered Dock  
*Rumex obtusifolius* - Broad-leaved Dock  
*Sagina procumbens* - Procumbent Pearlwort  
*Salix caprea* - Goat willow  
*Sambucus nigra* - Elder  
*Scrophularia nodosa* - Common Figwort  
*Sedum acre* - Biting Stonecrop  
*Senecio jacobaea* - Common Ragwort  
*Senecio squalidus* - Oxford Ragwort  
*Senecio vulgaris* - Groundsel  
*Silene rubra* - Red Champion  
*Sisymbrium officinale* - Hedge Mustard  
*Solanum dulcamara* - Bittersweet  
*Sorbus aucuparia* - Rowan  
*Stachys sylvatica* - Hedge Woundwort  
*Stellaria holostea* - Greater Stitchwort  
*Stellaria media* - Chickweed  
*Symphoricarpos rivularis* - Snowberry  
*Tamus communis* - Black Bryony  
*Tanacetum parthenium* - Feverfew  
*Taraxacum officinale* - Dandelion  
*Trifolium pratensis* - Red clover  
*Trifolium repens* - White Clover  
*Tussilago farfara* - Coltsfoot  
*Ulmus glabra* - Wych Elm  
*Urtica dioica* - Common Nettle  
*Vicia angustifolia* - Narrow-leaved Vetch  
*Vicia cracca* - Tufted Vetch  
*Vicia sepia* - Bush Vetch

Visit to Ticknall - 6th July, 1987 led by Alan Heath

The weather was warm following a very hot day. Spotted Orchids were found in flower but we did not find any Bee Orchids. The Glade was visited to see the Bryophytes and several members braved the decent by rope to visit the Cave.

Samples were taken from three pools at the site and the following is a combined list:-

ALGAE - Cladophora  
Spirogyra  
Oscillatoria  
Scenedesmus  
Closterium concavum  
Lemna minor

DIATOMS Tabellaria  
Diatoma  
Fragellaria  
Pleurosigma  
Pinnularia  
Navicula sp.  
Cymbella ehrenbergii

PROTOZOA Amoeba  
Vorticella

LARVAE Alderfly larva  
Caddis Larva  
Chaoborus pupa

WATER SNAILS Limnaea sp.

In addition to the above the following were seen:-

Green Hydra	Gammarus	Diaptomus	Daphnia obtusa
Brown Hydra	Ascellus	Simocephalus	
Hydracarina	Chaetonotus	Cypris	

Tests were made on the water for pH

The large pond was 7.7 and the nearby smaller pond which has a strong blue colour to the water was 7.2.

Alan Heath

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ODDITIES IN THE GARDEN by Nora Knight

I have lived at my present address for over thirty years and have tended the garden during most of that time. Each year I have observed the common insects that one finds in a garden, in the soil, on the vegetation and in the air, but this spring two unusual phenomena have occurred.

Actually, the first of these took place in my neighbour's garden. On 18th April while she was forking over the flower border she noticed small holes in the soil. Later in the evening she called me to see a number of bees which were flying low, in a confused manner, over the area where she had been working. Next day more holes appeared and the bees,

which were reddish-brown in colour, very furry, and about the same size as an ordinary hive-bee, were very active going in and out of the holes. On 29th April there was a thunderstorm with torrential rain. This obliterated the holes, but once more they reappeared. Similar holes in the lawn were also observed.

Upon closer examination I noticed that each hole was surrounded by very fine soil. I was fascinated to observe that the bees returning to the holes were carrying considerable amounts of pollen on their hind legs. Occasionally they could be seen stroking pollen off their bodies with their fore-legs into the pollen baskets on the hind pair.

At this stage I decided that a little research into the life cycle of this particular kind of bee was called for and with that object in mind I went to the library. I had to really search but eventually I found an account which exactly fitted the bees. They are mining bees and they make burrows in banks, paths and lawns. Each female bee sinks a nest-shaft vertically into the ground and then branches into a mass of chambers, each of which is filled with a cake of pollen mixed with nectar on to which a single egg is laid. Pollen is nutritious and the grubs grow rapidly. They stay underground until the following spring when the new generation of adult bees emerge, opening up the shaft to the surface. This is the time when the deposits of fine soil around the holes appear. Although each female bee makes her own separate nest, many will nest together. By the end of June the females have finished their work, closed up the burrow entrances and died.

As a final observation I noticed that the emergence of these bees occurred at exactly the time when my plum blossom was at its best and I probably owe the pollination of the blossom to these busy creatures.

On 20th May I noticed another peculiarity in my garden. I had been trimming a hedge which is a mixture of privet, hawthorn and wild plum. It was very untidy and in places I cut off quite large branches, which I afterwards cut up into shorter lengths to dispose of them. While doing this I noticed a twig which was not a twig; it was an animate object. In my ignorance I thought it must be some kind of stick insect. I put it into a large glass jar with a variety of greenery and covered the top of the jar with a piece of muslin. It selected the plum and attached itself to a leaf at the very top of the jar. It seemed to be attached to the vegetation at both ends and in form and colour was just like a twig even to having a 'bud' at one end and other bud-like protuberances on the body. At this stage I did not know which end was the head! It was about 3" long.

Anxious to identify this creature off I went again to the library. My 'stick insect' did not correspond to any of the illustrations and it seemed I had drawn a blank. I flicked through the pages of a book on Moths and Butterflies and to my delight there was a life-size illustration of my latest oddity. It was the caterpillar of the peppered moth, *biston betularia*.

According to my book of reference it is a typical looper, inch worm or measuring-worm. Its head is bud-like and it has six true legs behind the head, and two pairs of sucker-like false legs suited for securing a firm hold on a twig or leaf.

I was going away next day and had decided to return the caterpillar to the hedge so I only had a short time for observations. All day it stayed immobile so I gently coaxed it to move. Its initial movement was by the six true legs behind the head, then the hind false legs were drawn up close behind so that the body made a loop, hence the names looper, measuring worm and inch worm.

The season starts officially on the 21st June at the time of Summer Solstice. It can occur a day earlier or a day later as the solstice is determined by the time the Earth reaches the 180° part of its orbit of the Sun. The thermometer has not yet reached the heights which might be expected in July but it is a time of intense activity for nature. By June most birds have a family to engage their attention or were awaiting the arrival of their young ones. The mammals, too, are concerned with family cares and insect life becomes increasingly abundant in June as countless caterpillars, grubs and flying adults appear everywhere. Somewhere around a million different kinds of insects have been named and described. We do not know the exact number because there are so many different species that it is impossible to keep accurate count. Aside from the huge number of insects, which in itself is enough to stimulate anyone's imagination, the habits of no two species are identical, for each shows some difference in food, structure, or habit.

In ponds you may see backswimmers, water boatmen and diving beetles swimming through the water. Water scorpions crawling along the bottom and whirligigs gyrating on the surface are all present for the patient observer. In the air above are the damsel flies and dragonflies. The larger and stronger dragonflies keep to the higher regions above the water, coursing back and forth, passing and repassing the same point at intervals of a few minutes. They are perfectly harmless, despite popular superstitions, and are quite valuable for the number of mosquitoes they destroy.

Examine a wild strawberry (or cultivated one for that matter) with your lens and you will find that it is not actually a berry, though it is fleshy in a way. Compare the strawberry with a tomato, which is a berry and you will see the difference. In the tomato the seeds are enclosed in fleshy fruit, but in the strawberry, the seeds are attached to the surface. Actually the seeds are a kind of fruit in themselves, called akenes, so that a strawberry in reality is a fruit made up of a number of smaller fruits. Botanically it is known as an aggregate fruit. Like butterflies, wild flowers seem to reach their maximum abundance in July. Yes, this is the time when the botanist and entomologist can engage in feverish activity trying to record all that is on offer at this time. Galls are always worthy of a second look. Even today we have much to learn about the physiology of gall formation, nor do we know why any particular gall should have a distinctive shape. We know that the egg of the gall-making insect is laid on the host plant or inserted into tissues and when the larva emerges, it makes its way to the meristematic tissues, that is to the cells capable of dividing and multiplying, because galls are formed only in such tissues. Once the larva has reached these tissues, it causes them to multiply more than they would normally. The result is an abnormal growth, or gall. Few galls attract our eye quickly as oak apples but there are numerous others which are worthy of study.

Who can fail to recognise the fern with its large green fronds, often as much as 3 ft (1 metre) in length. Spore cases usually appear in July as small brown spots on the lower surface of the leaf. When viewed with a lens, they are small globular objects set on the ends of stalks. Under the microscope, a spore case (sporangium) is seen to be surrounded by a jointed ring, or annulus. Spores that fall onto favourable soil germinate quickly and develop into small green structures of delicate tissues.

One could go on and on describing the many fascinating things to be seen at this season. Examine the compound eye of almost any insect with your lens and you can readily see the facets. In the common house fly there are some 4000 of them in one eye alone and 17,000 in the eye of the swallow-tail butterfly. Ants have a relatively small number, a mere 400!

There are so many things to study and command our attention. Leaf miners and freshwater sponges are two more examples but I conclude with a brief reference to flatworms. According to species they can be a variety of colours but are usually black, grey or brown. Found in freshwater they are only about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch long (1cm). Planaria are common and live on stems, leaves and algae-covered stones. The mouth of planarians can be seen with a lens and the food, which consists of small animals, living or dead, passes into a large branched intestine sometimes visible as a vine like tracery on the back. They are sensitive to various stimuli. Touch one and it shows a negatively thigmotropic response, that is, moves quickly away from the direction of the stimulus. They dislike bright light and can distinguish between small differences of light intensity.

Yes, the summer season is a very busy time with far more to see than most of us can find time for. I have avoided the more obvious in some cases, in order to entice you to fresh fields of exploration and to encourage the use of a hand lens. So much is missed. As I have so often said with the greatest respect to the ornithologists, ".... there is more to nature than bird watching." I think this is why I am not a bird watcher. I haven't the time! Any day now we shall tear off another month from our calendar, which is merely a man-made device to inform us that time hurries on.

The sultry summer passes, September comes;  
Soft twilight of the slow declining year.  
Autumn approaches.

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## IMPRESSIONS OF WILDLIFE (& OTHERWISE) AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE

by Joyce & George Smith

This July, we were fortunate to receive an invitation to attend a Royal Garden Party. Suitably attired, we presented ourselves at the main gates and were directed through the archway below the balcony on which the Royal Family appear on State occasions. Crossing an inner courtyard, we went up the red carpeted steps to the main entrance, ushered through the apartments, out onto the stone terrace at the rear of the Palace overlooking a vista of lawns, rose gardens, shrubs, trees and a large lake - giving the illusion of a country estate, marred only by the distant roar of London traffic, punctuated frequently by police sirens.

Observing small tables and chairs set out before the refreshment pavilions on either side of the main lawn, one side for Royalty and the Diplomatic Corps, the other for lesser mortals, we decided, as did other guests, to partake of tea before our hostess appeared and before the silver urns ran dry!

At 4pm, when the Queen was expected, the visitors began to form two long lines and the military bands with which we had been entertained, struck up the National Anthem and Her Majesty, preceded by the Yeoman of the Guard and accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh, plus a small party of VIPs, appeared on the terrace and slowly passed through the lines of visitors, stopping to chat with various individuals.

Having seen the Royal party at close quarters and having patronised the refreshment pavilions once again, we decided to explore the grounds. Around the periphery of the lawn were formal gardens, chiefly of roses and we were pleased to see a great variety of trees all labelled, masking the high wall enclosing the grounds. The area below the trees had been left to naturalise and we noted many wild flowers and small birds, but without binoculars we were unable to positively identify the latter. On the lake were various water fowl - mallard, tufted duck, Canada geese, moorhen, coot and surprisingly a blaze (?) of flamingoes, while a heron was observed flying over.

At 6pm, the Queen and her party, having taken tea (from the golden tea urns) in the Royal pavilion, retired, using the same procedure. The visitors were then allowed to view some of the ground floor apartments, furnished in red velvet, ornate china cabinets, large gilded portraits, ancestral statues and Victorian fireplaces.

The usual casually attired crowds of sightseers, cameras at the ready, greeted us as we emerged into the mundane world once more. -

A truly memorable occasion!

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#### AUTUMN AT ATTENBOROUGH - Alec Ferguson

Most of our Summer visitors have departed Southwards, but a few Swallows and Martins are still around into October. However, the passage migrants may be seen and the Winter visitors begin to arrive. Groups of Shovelers may be seen on the Church pond, Works pond and elsewhere, while Teal are always around the Delta area and Pochard on the main ponds along with increased numbers of Mallard and Tufted Duck and more Coots all coming in from Northern Europe.

A few Snipe are to be seen in October, usually around the Delta or in the marshy corner of Clifton Pond if the water is low. Groups of Wigeon, a few Golden Eye (always diving) and sometimes Gadwell occur on the Main Ponds, while the Cormorant numbers build up to 50 or so, on the dead trees, on the Tern's platform and on islets, and usually 6 or 8 Herons can be seen resting and the water's edge among the bushes.

Redshank, Peewit and perhaps Water Rail occupy the Delta area from time to time and an occasional Pheasant. There are plenty of Black-headed Gulls (no longer black-headed) and sometimes Greater and Lesser Black-backs, Common and Herring Gulls - not always easy to sort out.

Fieldfares and Redwings arrive to raid the hawthorn bushes or are maybe on open ground, though they were much scarcer last winter. Parties of Long-tailed Tits, as well as Great and Blue Tits are very attractive on the bushes as are the odd pairs of Bullfinches. Some years there are Goldfinches on open ground and I once saw about 50 by the River.

Each year something unexpected seems to turn up and join the crowd of Mallard, Mute Swans, Canada Geese and Coots by the Car Park. Last year we had an attractive Bar Headed Goose as well as 2 Grey Lags and sometimes a Barnacle. The previous year we had a very attractive Mandarin drake which stayed for 6 months and once I saw a Red Crested Pochard.

One November day I found several people gazing across at a bush covered islet. Apparently a Tawny Owl was roosting there. After locating it with some difficulty, being well camouflaged, I found it there for the succeeding three weeks. On the last occasion that I saw it I had my best day as regards number of species seen in the 2 hours or so that I spend there, 47 species

on a December day. Apart from the Owl I saw, Shovelers, Redshank, Water Rail, Pheasant, Long-tailed Tits, Kingfisher, Little Grebe, Redpoll, Siskin, Goldfinch and the Mandarins. Quite an interesting collection for one of the shorter days of the year.

Other unusual Autumn sightings have been a Short-eared Owl hunting in the afternoon, and a Smew. Every season something unexpected may be found with the scene ever-changing.

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NOW THAT AUTUMN IS HERE - Alan Heath

Autumn is harvest time, when shops are laden with a great variety of garden produce. Nature puts on an even more lavish display for the birds and mammals to take advantage of. Luscious fruits and berries whose brilliant colours rival the flowers of the September landscape. In describing a dinner, Pepys speaks of a second course as consisting of "two neat's tongues, cheese and tansy." The tansy was a sort of cake or fritter made from the leaves of the tansy. Tansy tea was a favourite beverage for colds and similar ailments.

We associate goldfinches with thistles, but they visit the flowers only after the seeds have been formed. Butterflies and bees visit the flowers when they are newly opened, for the densely clustered florets are rich in nectar. There are several species of thistles but to really appreciate the colouring it is necessary to examine the flowers with the lens.

A decaying log is never so attractive as when covered with mosses and lichens. Compared with higher plants, mosses have a simple stem and leaf structure but the most striking part is the fruiting portion or sporophyte. Some species may be recognised by the characteristic way in which the leaves grow, but most can be better identified by the shape and form of the spore case, which varies according to species. While you are searching for mosses you might look along the bank of a brook or stream or among mosses in damp woods and find ribbon like plants growing close to the ground. They may be papery thin and may be either long and slender or repeatedly lobed and forked. Called liverworts, they are very simple plants without stems or leaves and represent the transition stage between water-living habit and land-living habit.

If we look in a damp, shaded place, we may find what appears to be a slimy, mould-like mass on a piece of rotting wood. When examined with the microscope, it reveals an unexpected beauty. It is a slime mould, a unique group of plants and which have few characteristics in common with other plants except that they produce spores. These plants move somewhat in the manner of the amoeba and can travel a considerable distance in a few hours. Lacking chlorophyll, they obtain nourishment from the damp organic substratum on which they live.

Officially winter does not come until around the 21st of December, when the Earth reaches the 360° point of its orbit. Learning to recognise the footprints of wild creatures is a study for any time of the year but they are perhaps more easily seen when snow is on the ground. Snowflakes themselves can be fascinating. They are of course crystals of water, for when water freezes it forms a hexagonal or six-sided pyramid. You can see such crystals anytime by just scraping some ice from the refrigerator onto a piece of glass and look at it with your lens. To see a crystal take form, you only need to dissolve a little salt in some water, place a drop of the solution on a piece of glass and then look at it with your lens. As water evaporates, small, perfect cubes appear, crystals of salt.

Autumn is the time for nuts and the time when the squirrels are building up their winter store. An acorn is a nut, botanically speaking and seemingly one acorn is much like another. They are however, quite variable in shape, size and form of the cup. It is possible to correlate the species of an oak with any given acorn.

The life of the pond or stream is much as it has been all-summer and will continue so until the temperature cools the water. Standing by the water's edge various members of the insect clan may be seen but others cannot, they are so small we need a microscope to know they are there at all. Some appear as tiny specks and others look like tiny threads which most assume they are. Such threads may be Hydras, named after the fabled monster of Hercules. Hydras are too small to be observed in their natural habitat and it is necessary to transfer a spray or two of nitella or elodea to a glass bowl or jar. If any hydras are present they will soon hang out in the water. Tentacles are present which are used to capture their prey and convey this food to their mouth. Daphnia, cyclops and cypris are among the organisms upon which they feed. The daphnia are usually quite common in the autumn and with a microscope you can watch the ingestion of food and follow it on its way to the digestive tract. Also visible are the rapidly beating heart, circulation, respiration, in fact, there is little you can't see! Daphnia has less privacy than the goldfish in an aquarium and can keep no secrets from anyone wishing to know all about its private life.

Autumn is a time of colour not only of changing leaves but also of various fungi which appear at this time. A very rewarding day is to visit a suitable habitat where such forms may be found.

As the colder weather comes we find we wish to linger outdoors less than usual, the nights draw in and soon the wind will howl through the leafless branches, leaving us with memories of more pleasant days. The time has now come to look back on the year's work, to complete the notes of wonderful things seen, to mount photographs taken, to catalogue slides. It is also the time to ensure that such notes and observations are duplicated in order that you may pass on a copy to Stan for LENS records. What is better than to share your joy with others as you prepare for another year. Nature is there to be enjoyed and whether you take a serious and in depth study of some particular aspect or merely an escape from the tensions and frustrations of modern living, your observations are worth recording.....  
.....and sharing.

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A Rider from Nora Knight

LENS meetings and excursions have often been a topic of conversation between myself and one particular friend. She does know that these are all concerned with natural history, but apparently she had no idea what the initials LENS stood for. After the ill-fated July evening excursion to the ashtip to observe moths, I was telling her the saga of how several of us assembled on a very busy and congested Lock Lane.

"None of us knew the exact location of our rendez-vous and after waiting more than half an hour, our leaders had not turned up," I said.

"Well, wasn't Len there?" came the innocent reply.

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7th December meeting - Christmas Quiz



BIRD SIGHTINGS - SPRING & SUMMER 1987.

Whilst I am keeping a complete record of all reported sightings, I have selected only the more interesting and unusual ones for inclusion in the bulletin, so as to avoid a long and perhaps tedious catalogue of the more common, everyday species.

CORMORANT	Large gatherings at Attenborough - 114 March, 80 April, 24, May	
Grey Heron	There seems to be a thriving heronry developing at Attenborough	
	19 Feb, 40 Apr, 28 May, 40 June	
BAR-HEADED GOOSE	1 16th Apr,	Attenborough
BARNACLE GOOSE	2 Mar/Apr	"
MALLARD	250 18th July,	"
COMMON SCOTER	2 5th Apr,	"
GOOSANDER	1 Feb/Mar,	"
RED BREASTED Merganser	2 21st Apr,	"
SMEW	1 Female Feb	"
RUDDY DUCK	56 Feb/Mar	"
OSPREY	1 7th May, 1 12th May	"
SPARROWHAWK	1 July,	Bramcote
BUZZARD	1 13th Mar.	"
MARSH HARRIER	1 13th May	Attenborough
HOBBY	1 May	"
PEREGRINE	1 Female 14th Apr	Wollaton Park
MERLIN	1 " 13th Mar	Attenborough
WATER RAIL	1 Feb/Mar	"
OYSTERCATCHER	1 29th Mar,	"
RINGED PLOVER	1 Mar	"
DUNLIN	28 Mar,	"
KNOT	1 20th July,	"
GREEN SANDPIPER	1 15th May,	"
RUFF	1 10th May,	"
CURLEW	1 July,	"
HERRING GULL	1 27th June,	" (Yellow legged W.Medit. race)
COMMON GULL	14 4th Apr,	"
COMMON TERN	45 9th May,	"
BLACK TERN	4 26th May,	"
TAWNY OWL	1 21st Mar,	Elvaston
GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER	1 9th Apr,	"
SAND MARTIN	160 1st Aug.	Attenborough
SEDGE WARBLER	12 18th Apr,	"
WHITETHROAT	1 19th Apr,	"
LESSER W'THROAT	1 Apr,	Chilwell
GARDEN WARBLER	1 Apr,	"
BLACKCAP	1 Feb, Attenboro, 1 Mar, Bramcote, 1 Mar, R.Erewash, 1 Apr, Toton	
GOLDCREST	1 Mar,	Bramcote
STONECHAT	1 25th Mar,	Toton
WHINCHAT	1 19th Apr,	Attenborough
LONG-TAILED TIT	1 19th Mar,	Bramcote.
TREECREEPER	1 7th Feb,	Attenborough
REDPOLL	1 19th Mar	Bramcote
LINNET	2 10th Apr	"
SISKIN	30 Mar.	Attenborough & Wollaton Park

LATE BIRD SIGHTINGS

WHIMBREL	1 2.8.87	Erewash Valley
White-tailed Sea Eagle	1 16.8.87	" " (1st rec.this century)
BLACK-WINGED STILT	1 18.8.87	Flying over Q.M.C. Towards Attenborough

MOTHS

SWALLOW TAIL	1	11.7.87	Quorndon Crescent
CLOUDED SILVER	1	11.7.87	" "

BUTTERFLIES

COMMA	1	4.8.87	" "
BRIMSTONE	1	3.10.87	" "

WILD FLOWERS

VIPERS BUGLOSS - a good specimen seen on Lock Lane Tip along with other flowers we could not positively identify. 28.7.87

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With reference to Clive's suggestion regarding B & B accommodation, if you let me have names and addresses I will make a list for insertion in the next Bulletin.

Fay Blackburn