

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

No. 21

Issued for Members and Friends of the

LONG EATON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

SPRING 1990

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SECRETARY	:	MARTIN HARVEY
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## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Again we have had the pleasure of welcoming some new faces at our meetings, always a good sign of a healthy society. Recently we have become involved with the Erewash Groundwork Trust who requested our assistance on their walks to advise on natural history. John Holmes spoke recently to the society about this and it is hoped that we may be able to provide the help they require. Both organisations will hopefully, benefit from this.

I take this opportunity to appeal once again for records for this bulletin, however few or brief, all are welcome.

I must end on a sad note. You may be aware that I have been involved with pond-life studies for many years now. At the end of January, Bill Adcock, the man with whom I carried out these studies, died suddenly. Bill was not a member of LENS and although I had tried to persuade him many times, he preferred to work alone. We had worked together since the 50's and I hope members will not mind my reference to the passing of a great local naturalist and man of science.

Alan W Heath

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Threat to Local Wildlife Site - Grange Park by Marion Smith 30.11.89

I once told a lady of my acquaintance that I belonged to Long Eaton Natural History Society.

"Long Eaton? Does Long Eaton have any natural history?"

I was able to reassure her that there were several sites of great natural interest in Long Eaton; Forbes Hole and an historically graded series of railway ballast ponds; West Park Fox Covert; Trent Lane and meadows; Lock Lane Ash Tip; Midland Street/ Toton Water Meadows; Grange Park and environs.

I have been 'keeping an eye' on Grange Park for some time. Copsey Croft has been developed for housing, the children's play area has been moved so that the indoor bowls club could extend, Long Eaton United Football Club have managed to preserve a piece of turf in this field but for how long?

The next field, at the bottom of Trenton Drive, used to be marked with an athletics track each year, by Council workmen. It is used for casual football games, frisbee and kite flying. A builder has been encroaching on this field for some time. Before building commences he yanks out the hawthorne hedge which the linnets love to flock onto. After the houses have been sold, the new householders first priority is to plant a new hedge, usually of a non native species. The bottom of the field adjoining the stream, is used by the Council for burning mounds of tree prunings.

Crossing a drainage dyke into the next field we find the children's delight, a large pool, excavated from an original ballast hole. Victoria Angling Club fish this pond, zander are rumoured to be in the lake. Swans and coots have tried to nest here, but there is no central island

and the birds are easily disturbed. Marsh marigold has flowered here two years following.

One day last June we recorded some of the plants of this area, we continued by crossing over the Golden Brook into the next field. We walked through the next field of long grass, nettles and thistles, past one of the old enclosure hedges into our field of main interest. This field is separated from St. Leonard's Riding School fields by a wide dyke, but occasionally horses leap the dyke and crop the field. This field is possibly the remnant of an original large hay field, the St Leonard's side could have been ploughed and reseeded sometime after the original field was bisected by the dyke. This field is of great natural history interest, when the betony and birdsfoot trefoil are in bloom..... the natural beauty is obvious to all. A list of the plants found is included.

After recording these plants we could have entered the land on the other side of the fence abutting the railway line. In the summer this land is remarkable, remember the tale of Johnny Appleseed? He certainly visited Long Eaton. Hundreds of apple trees of every variety, fruit in abundance, there are also pear trees and the occasional plum.

When the summer sun shines and the smell of apples fills the air, bees and butterflies visit the multitude of flowers, this is absolute Heaven.

Application for planning permission to build 500 houses on this land has been made by the British Rail Board. Clare Stone (Erewash Valley) and Pat Brassley (Derbyshire Wildlife Trust), have expressed interest in the site, let us hope they will support us in condemnation of the scale of the proposed development so that Long Eaton will continue to have sites of great natural interest.

Grange Park                      12.6.88

Damp meadow and pond.

Acer pseudoplatanus.....sycamore  
Achillea millefolium....yarrow  
Alliaria petiolata.....garlic mustard  
Alopecurus geniculatus..marsh foxtail  
A. pratensis.....meadow foxtail  
Anthriscus sylvestris...cow parsley  
Arctium lappa.....great burdock  
Arrhenatherum elatius...oat grass  
Artemisia vulgaris.....mugwort  
Betonica officinalis....betony      = *Stachys betonica*  
Bromus sterilis.....barren brome  
Calystegia sepium.....Bindweed  
Capsella bursa-pastoris..shepherd's purse

Centaurea nigra.....knapweed  
 Cerastium fontanum.....common mouse-ear  
 Chrysanthemum leucanthemum...ox-eye daisy  
 C. vulgare.....tansy  
 Cirsium arvense..... creeping thistle  
 C. vulgare.....spear thistle  
 Conium maculatum.....hemlock  
 Conopodium majus.....pignut  
 Crataegus monogyna.....hawthorn  
 Crepis capillaris.....smooth hawksbeard  
 C. biennis.....rough hawksbeard  
 Cynosurus cristatus.....crested dogs-tail  
 Dactylis glomerata.....cocksfoot grass  
 Deschampsia caespitosa.....tufted hair grass  
~~Elodea canadensis~~ *Elodea*  
 Epilobium angustifolium.....rosebay willowherb  
 E. hirsutum.....great hairy willowherb  
 Filipendula ulmaria.....meadowsweet  
 Galium aparine.....goosegrass  
 G. verum.....ladies bedstraw  
 Geranium dissectum.....cut leaved cranesbill  
 Heracleum sphondylium.....hogweed  
 Hieracium perpropinquum.....hawkweed  
 Holcus lanatus.....Yorkshire fog  
 Hypericum perforatum.....perforated St John s wort  
 Hypochoeris radicata.....common cat'sear  
 Iris pseudacorus.....yellow flag  
 Juncus effusus.....soft rush  
 Lathyrus pratensis.....Yellow meadow vetchling  
 Leontodon hispidus.....rough hawkbit  
 Lolium perenne.....ryegrass  
 Lotus corniculatus.....birdsfoot trefoil  
 Malus sylvestris.....crab apple  
 Medicago sativa.....lucerne  
 Pimpinella saxifraga.....burnet saxifrage  
 Plantago lanceolata.....ribwort plantain  
 P. major.....lamb's tongue plantain  
 Poa pratensis.....meadow grass  
 Polygonum aviculare.....knotgrass  
 P. persicaria.....persicaria  
 Potamogeton natans *Potamogeton natans* *floating pondweed*  
 Potentilla anserina.....silverweed

<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	selfheal
<i>Pyrus communis</i>	pear
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	meadow buttercup
<i>R. repens</i>	creeping buttercup
<i>R. sceleratus</i>	celery leaved buttercup
<i>Reseda lutea</i>	mignonette
<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>	yellow rattle
<i>Ribes nigrum</i>	blackcurrant
<i>Rorippa sylvestris</i>	creeping yellowcress
<i>Rosa canina</i>	dogrose
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	blackberry
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	sorrel
<i>R. conglomerata</i>	clustered dock
<i>R. crispus</i>	curled dock
<i>Salix fragilis</i>	crack willow
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	elderberry
<i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>	salad burnet
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	ragwort
<i>Sonchus oleracea</i>	smooth sow thistle
<i>Sparganium erectum</i>	branched burr reed
<i>Stachys arvensis</i>	woundwort
<i>Stellaria graminea</i>	lesser stitchwort
<i>S. media</i>	Chickweed
<i>Torilis japonica</i>	hedge parsley
<i>Tragopogon pratensis</i>	goatsbeard
<i>Trifolium campestre</i>	hop trefoil
<i>T. pratense</i>	red clover
<i>T. repens</i>	white clover
<i>Tussilago farfara</i>	coltsfoot
<i>Typha latifolia</i>	reedmace
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	stinging nettle
<i>Vicia sativa</i>	common vetch
<i>Vulpia bromoides</i>	squirrel tail fescue

Grange Park

Mammals 1987/88/89

- Fox
- Water vole
- Mole
- Bank vole
- Brown rat
- Long tailed fieldmouse
- Hedgehog
- Water shrew
- Common shrew
- Pygmy shrew
- Horse
- Dog

Lepidoptera (1989)

- Small heath
- Small tortoiseshell
- Wall
- Common blue
- Large white
- Six spot burnet
- Meadow brown
- Gate keeper

Birds (1989)

- Yellowhammer
- Chaffinch
- Lesser black backed gull
- wood pigeon
- Lapwing
- Crow
- House martin
- Kingfisher
- Heron
- Cuckoo

Amphibians (1989)

- common frog
- common toad
- smooth newt
- Pond various
- Freshwater shrimp
- Caddis fly larvae
- Pond skater
- Leech
- Bloodworm
- Mayfly larvae
- Whirligig beetle
- Pond skater
- Brown Aeshna
- Blue tailed damsel fly
- Common blue damsel fly

- Perch
- Pike
- Roach
- Tench
- Fungi (1988)

Playing field

Best field.

- Common inkcap ... Coprinus atramentarius
- Shaggy inkcap....C. comatus
- Keeping widow....Lacrymaria velutina
- Lycopodium obscurum
- Snowy waxcap.....Hygrocybe nivea
- Conical waxcap...H. conica
- Common puffball...Lycoperdon perlatum

FLOWERS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN - 13th November 1989 - Bert Hall

Despite a very foggy night, the meeting was well attended. Bert Hall brought his wife along and we were treated to some excellent slides of the islands of the Mediterranean. The very marked difference between the flowers of the East and Western sides of the Mediterranean was stressed. Some orchids growing in the Balearic Islands were not found in Cyprus for instance. The northern ridge of mountains in Majorca was the best region there and we were treated to some slides of very impressive scenery. Some species of flowers actually flower in the spring and again in the autumn. Peonies found in Majorca grow nowhere else in the world. Reference was made to Corfu and Crete. Crete has a background of high mountains the highest of which reaches some 8000 feet thus providing varied plant habitats. It had been hoped to show slides of the visit to Cyprus but time did not allow this.

Mrs Eileen Carter thanked Bert Hall and remarked that many of the places illustrated in the talk had been visited by her and she knew them well.

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FEEDING HABITS OF BIRDS AND RSPB FILM 'OSPREY WATCH' 27th November 1989

Richard Shaw gave an excellent talk on the feeding habits of various birds. Information given included the fact that the Puffin's bill is only coloured at the breeding season and that the scarcity of sandeels is probably the cause of the marked reduction of puffins in recent years. Magpies visit our gardens as a substitute for the loss of hedgerows upon which they depend.

Two films were shown, the first of which was a very humorous one narrated by Bernard Cribbins about Robins. The second was 'Osprey Watch' which illustrated one of the most intense conservation projects ever undertaken.

A raffle for the RSPB raised over £10 with prizes being won by Mrs Greensmith, Mrs Carter and Mrs Marion Smith.

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RARE BIRD SIGHTED IN RISLEY BY MARION SMITH

On Saturday 9th December, 27 people, including 7 members from LENS participated in a walk around Risley's fields, organised by Mr Moles of the Groundwork Trust, led by Chris Bates of the Ramblers Club.

<u>Mammals</u>	<u>Birds</u>	<u>Flowers</u>
Mole (Hills)	Fieldfare	Scentless mayweed
Badger (Scrapings)	Pheasant (dead)	Red campion
Field mouse (runs)	Chaffinch (flock)	Red dead nettle
Rabbit (burrow)	Bluetit	Field speedwell
Grey squirrel	Great tit	Chickweed
	House Sparrow	Shepherds Purse
	Collared Dove	Meadow buttercup
	Blackbird	

Fungi: Wood mushroom, Wood Blewitt, Candlesnuff fungus, Trooping crumble cap, Nolanea sp., Marasmius sp., Velvet Shank, Fairy ring champignon

The most interesting item was sighted by Chris. Bates, "What sort of owl is that?" he asked.

After much debate the answer was supplied by the Long Eatonian owner of the bird. A RED TAILED HAWK an American bird he had purchased for £900!! The hawk had chased a squirrel up the tree and was most reluctant to return to the wrist for a lure of dead chick. Later, on production of a dead rabbit the hawk came down and we were able to admire the grey, brown back and wings, brown streaked light coloured breast, short chestnut tail, yellow legs with powerful talons bedecked with belled jesses.

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The following were sighted by Marion Smith, in the Barton Lane area Attenborough on the 3rd January, 1990:-

Fungi Velvet shank, jews ear, candlesnuff fungus,  
Oyster fungus on willow at top of Barton Lane.

Flowers Charlock, Oxford Ragwort

Mammals Mole hills, weasel.

The weasel was seen where Barton Lane passes the Nature reserve, it bounded across the lane onto a hillock where it sat upright, its faded red coat, white front and stumpy tail were plainly visible, then it flattened its ears and continued its journey to the waters edge.

The main differences between a stoat and a weasel are a) the weasel is smaller, b) weasel's tail is shorter, c) the weasel's tail is uniform in colour, whereas the stoat's has a dark tip.

Work has now started on a large retail development at Barton Lane, so far the hedge has survived, Notts Wildlife Trust have been consulted about this site.

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WEATHER SUMMARY 1989 as recorded at 136 Trowell Grove,  
LONG EATON

JANUARY Generally mild and dry month. Quite windy on 13th

FEBRUARY A mixed and mild month. A little snow on 17th which did not settle. Dominance of West or South-West wind. Quite windy at times especially on the 13th.

MARCH A mixed month which was windy in the second and third weeks. Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) seen on evening of March 13 which was a particularly bright display seen despite street lights and the moon.

APRIL A Wet month. Cold with snow on two days (4th and 25th and a thunderstorm on the 12th. Southerly gale on the 11th which caused some local damage.

MAY The driest month of the year, despite a thunderstorm on the 24th. During the month, 15 days had temperatures over 70° F and three of these were over 80

JUNE Fine, sunny and often warm for the most part, especially the middle two weeks.



JULY Some rain in second week and at the end of the month, otherwise fine and warm. Warmest day of the year was on the 22nd with a maximum temperature of over 90° F

AUGUST Mainly dry and warm. The bulk of the rain in this month came on two days (14th and 26th).

SEPTEMBER A generally fine month with some rain in the middle two weeks. A dominance of North or North-East wind and quite windy at times especially the 17th.

OCTOBER The first real break in the long dry spell with rain in the middle two weeks. Windy in the last week and a southerly gale on the 28th.

NOVEMBER Fair amount of rain during the first ten days, especially on the 8th with nearly an inch of rain in 24 hours. Fair amount of fog and on the 13th and 14th there were two days of fog all day. Considerable frost in the last week with the coldest day of the year on the 27th.

DECEMBER Wettest month of the year although April came a close second. There was a lot of rain in the middle two weeks. Air pressure was very low on the 17th and there was a south-west gale on that day. A little snow which quickly cleared.

WARMEST DAY 22nd July with temperature over 90° F

COLDEST DAY 27th November

WETTEST DAY 14th December with over an inch of rain in 24 hours.

WETTEST MONTH December although April came a close second.

DRIEST MONTH May

TOTAL RAIN 21.38 inches which is 0.41 inches per week  
This is 2 inches less than last year but 1988 was low too.

AVERAGE MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE was 6 degrees more than last year

AVERAGE MINIMUM TEMPERATURE was the same as last year.

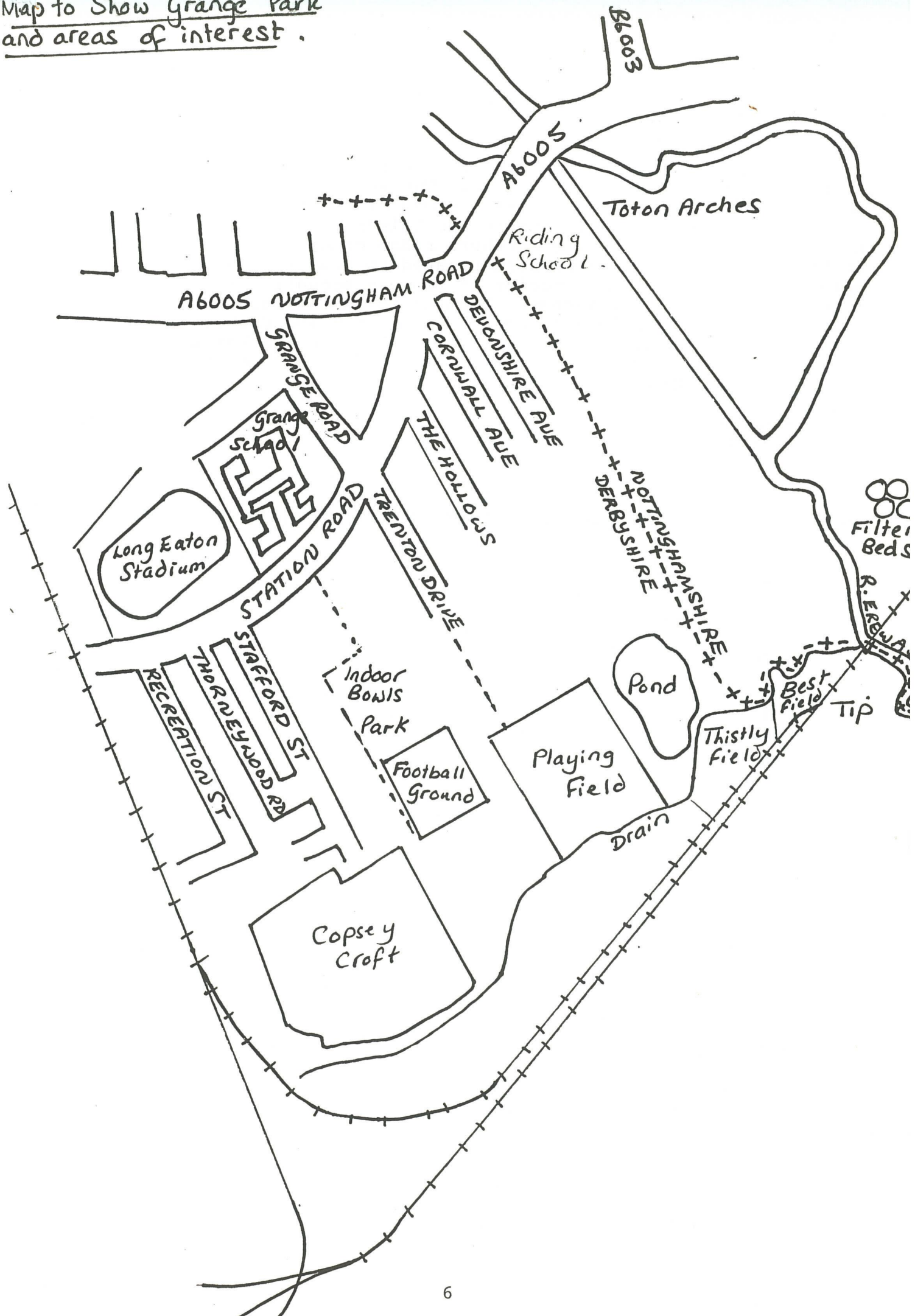
DAYS WITH TEMPERATURES OF 80° F OR MORE - 26 compared with only 5 for 1988

FOG There were 5 fogs as distinct from morning mist. There were two days of fog all day, November 13th and 14th.

GENERAL COMMENTS Notable for a long dry summer with the rainfall well below average. The rain total was much lower until December when some of the difference was made up.

Compared with the very good summer of 1976 the year 1989 had more hours of sunshine but the average temperature was the same. The lowest rainfall for the last 30 years was in 1976 and the 1989 total compared with that of 1970 and 1974.

Map to Show Grange Park and areas of interest.



Nigel gave an illustrated talk about a visit he had made to Greenland during its brief summer. Spectacular scenes were revealed including aerial views. Six times the size of France, it is equivalent to the distance from London to the Sahara Desert. The air is very clear and so distances are very deceptive. The arctic hare, arctic fox, white-tailed sea eagle and snow buntings were described as well as seals and whales. Salmon are found in the rivers and Nigel had made many attempts to photograph them jumping. All the mountains come up from the sea and the highest is 12,000 feet. Greenland is the meeting place of the East and West flora and the ice there is so heavy that the earth's crust is warped down by the weight. Much of Greenland is unmapped and rocks are mainly Rhyolite and Basalt. Sadly the mineral wealth of the region is a threat to its future. Char exist in the many tarns and mosquitoes are abundant.

The locals are rather anti-western especially in conservation. They claim that their livelihood depends on the hunting of seals and whales. They are hunter-gatherers, taking only what they need. They are not responsible for the decline of whales, it is the Japanese and others who exploit the whale populations. Life exists on the coastal fringes and the rest is ice covered. Evidence of pollution exists in the ice which can be dated and hence the pollution monitored.

An expedition to Greenland from Trent College in 1991 will be led by Nigel. The party were already in training and had also been experimenting to make a palatable highly nutritious food to take on the trip, this consisted of sultanas, honey and digestive biscuit baked together. We expressed the hope that Nigel will visit LENS again after the 1991 expedition to describe this exciting event.

The interest shown in this talk was illustrated by the large number of questions which were asked by members and we were privileged to share in the excitement of a visit to such a beautiful and isolated region of our world.

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WILDLIFE OF THE ISLE OF MAY AND THE FARNE ISLANDS - Alan Scott 22.1.90

Alan Scott of the NWT was a warden at both the Isle of May and the Farne Islands. He explained that the Isle of May can be seen from Edinburgh Castle. There is not a rich flora and few invertebrates and almost all are unrecorded. Both are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The most common mammal is the rabbit which was introduced by lighthouse keepers. The world's largest population of Grey Seals is to be found there, fortunately they did not suffer the recent disease which affected the Common Seal population. Much scientific work is being carried out on the Isle of May but very little on the Farne Islands which are owned by the National Trust who encourage visitors. The bird population in summer is impressive, with Puffins, Guillemots, Razorbills, Shag, Cormorant, Oyster Catcher, Gannets, Herring Gull, Arctic Terns and many other species, best time to visit is the first two weeks in June.

John Holmes of the Erewash Groundwork Trust then spoke for a few minutes about their work and requested assistance from LENS by providing naturalists to advise on what may be seen on walks etc. It was generally agreed that we would try to co-operate with them.

WINTERING ON BARKER'S POND by Fay Blackburn

This winter has been very active on Barker's Pond with many 'comings and goings'. At different times there have been up to 30 mallards, 8 mute swans, 10 tufted duck (which we have been very pleased about as it is some years since these visited the pond), 8 moorhen, 5 coots. The moorhens have paired up, so have the coots leaving an odd one, which is hounded off the pond from time to time. The tufties are still with us with numbers fluctuating from 3/7. One pair of swans flew off some time ago leaving a family of two adults and 4 young. Later, as is usual the adults were sending the young off to fend for themselves. It was quite traumatic and brutal at times, in the end the PDSA were called out as the young kept flying off and landing in gardens and on the roadside, the PDSA officer said that he was taking them to Attenborough where there was more space.

My daughter was very fortunate to see a kingfisher at close quarters, it landed about a yard from her as she was hanging up washing in our garden.

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OUT AND ABOUT by Fay Blackburn

On Saturday 3rd March John and myself decided to have a walk around Attenborough as it seemed quite a pleasant day. We parked at the main car park and walked down the path to the River Trent, at the point where you have to decide whether to turn right or left we saw a man running towards us carrying binoculars, seeing that we were similarly attired with binoculars and telescope, he breathlessly told us that he thought there was a red breasted merganser on one of the pools. We set off after him, but in his haste to reach the area where he thought the bird was the young man 'put the bird up' it seemed to land in amongst a large flock of various birds. We met up with two other bird spotters, one of which had a telescope and between us we were able to sort the merganser out from the great crested grebe which at first look it can be confused. We were informed that the merganser was a first for Notts! We then went with this very knowledgeable young man to look for a shag that was roosting with all the cormorants, after much searching we found it, also we saw the continental version cormorant, which apparently is not very common.

In the afternoon we went for a walk along the canal bank towards Trent Lock, then along the Cranfleet canal and over the style to Fletcher's Pond. On the Erewash Canal near Trent Lock we were very fortunate to see a pair of Kingfishers, then round the corner on the Cranfleet Canal we watched a pair of Little Grebe feeding, I hadn't realised how much colour the male has in its head. All in all a very enjoyable day.

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On 14th January, Marion Smith recorded the following at Forbes Hole.

Candle snuff fungus-Xylaria hypoxylon, Brain fungus-Tremella mesenterica, Bonnet mycena-Mycena galericulata, The deceiver-Laccaria laccata, Field blewitt-Lepista saeva, Pear shaped puffball- Lycoperdon perlatum Wood woolly foot-Collybia peronata, Glistening inkcap-Coprinus micaceus

Plants: Bulrush, Crowfoot, Male fern-Dryopteris felix-mas, Broad buckler fern-Diaustriaca

Very few bird sightings have been handed in this time and of those that were, none were of rare or particularly unusual birds, other than those mentioned in 'Out and About'

LITTLE GREBE	2	3.3.90	Cranfleet Canal
CORMORANT-continental sp.	1	3.3.90	Attenborough
GREYLAG GOOSE	1	19.12.89	"
PINTAIL	1	19.12.89	"
SHOVELER	10	3.3.90	"
TUFTED DUCK	3/10	Jan/Mch	Barker's Pond
GOLDENEYE	16	3.3.90	Attenborough
RED-BREASTON MERGANSER	1	3.3.90	"
RUDDY DUCK	16	3.3.90	"
RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE	12	27.1.90	Dale Abbey
PHEASANT	1	9.12.89	Risley
LAPWING	30+	3.1.90	Attenborough
LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL	1	27.1.90	Dale Abbey
" " " "	1	Feb 90	Barker's Pond
GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL	1	3.1.90 & 3.3.90	Attenborough
LITTLE OWL	1	27.1.90	Dale Abbey
KINGFISHER	1	16.2.90	Barker's Pond
"	2	3.3.90	Trent Lock
GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER	1	4.12.89	Trent College
GREY WAGTAIL	1	9.1.90	Toton Park
CHIFFCHAFF	1	15.1.90	Nottingham Road
GOLDCREST	1/2	Nov/Dec	Toton Sidings/Water Meadows
FIELDFARE	20+	3.1.90	Attenborough
"	15	27.1.90	Dale Abbey
REDWING	20+	3.1.90	Attenborough
"	2	13.1.90	West Park
"	2	27.1.90	Dale Abbey
"	1	3.2.90	Barker's Pond
LONG TAILED TIT	6	27.1.90	Dale Abbey
WILLOW TIT	1	3.3.90	Attenborough
TREE CREEPER	1	27.1.90	Dale Abbey
" "	1	26.12.89	Barker's Pond
YELLOW HAMMER	1	27.1.90	Dale Abbey
BULLFINCH	6	27.1.90	" "

Frog spawn was evident on the 5th March in our pool and also in the pool at Risley Primary School, this is the earliest I can recall in this area.

Fay Blackburn

