



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

No.22

Issued for Members and Friends of the

LONG EATON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

DECEMBER 1990

- CHAIRMAN : ALAN HEATH
- SECRETARY : MARION SMITH
- MEETINGS : JUDY & JOHN
- SECRETARY : LANGFORD
- TREASURER : NORAH KNIGHT



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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It is indeed a pleasure to be able to report yet another excellent and successful summer programme. It would be unfair to single out any particular event as all were very good and generally well attended.

I would like to extend the congratulations and good wishes of LENS to Karen and Nigel Bidgood on the arrival of their daughter and to thank Karen for all the hard work she has done as Meetings Secretary. Our continued high standard has been largely due to Karen's efforts which are appreciated by all.

September this year saw the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. Sadly there is still a Battle of Britain going on in that there is an urgent need for conservation and the protection of our environment perhaps now more than ever before. It is comforting to know that organisations like ours can do their bit to help make life better for future generations. It seems that not only humans are concerned, as in the recent issue of National Geographic, the question was asked, 'Can a bat really save the world?' Believe it or not, the answer is yes. In addition to controlling vast numbers of insect pests and pollinating many of the world's most valuable plants, bats are responsible for up to 95% of the seed dispersal essential to regeneration of the tropical rain forests. Without rain forests, the world's entire ecological balance would be destroyed. Whilst bats may not be the most attractive of mammals, their importance is paramount.

Finally, may I again appeal for records for the Bulletin. John is always anxious to receive any sightings however few as these add to our contribution to the welfare of our wildlife.

Alan Heath

As our last Bulletin was printed in the Spring some items have been to hand for some time, the following being one of them.

OBITUARY : Dennis Carlisle

Sadly we report the death of one of our members, Dennis Carlisle following an illness from which he appeared to be recovering well. He had many interests which he pursued after his retirement from Rolls Royce. He had gained a degree, B.Sc. Engineering from Nottingham University. Dennis's greatest love was for plants of the mountains and was an active member of the Alpine Garden Society. In addition to growing and showing plants he spent many holidays in the mountains of Europe, searching for and photographing alpine plants. Although not suffering fools gladly he was a kind and generous friend. He leaves a widow Nora, who accompanied him on all his expeditions and also a daughter and two grand daughters. His lively company at LENS will be missed and our condolences are extended to his wife and family. Finally I would like to thank Eileen Carter for providing the background information of Dennis's life.

Alan Heath

MOUNT HERMON TO EILAT: BIRDS OF ISRAEL Keith Hammond 26th March

Keith spent two weeks in Israel on an RSPB bird holiday in March 1987 travelling from the extreme north of Israel to the south. Slides were shown of many of the 240 or so species seen as well as mammals and wild flowers. Impressive scenery was shown which included many areas of biblical interest and, having explored a remote area, the party found themselves in a minefield! Fortunately there were no serious consequences of this.

An underwater observatory was visited where it was possible to observe fish in their natural habitat in the Red Sea. A zoo was also visited where biblical species are being bred.

Keith had chosen a time of cold weather but was there for the migration from Africa in March. Of the many birds seen the list included Marsh Sandpiper, Egrets, Yellow Wagtail, Marsh Harrier, three species of Eagle, Palm Dove, Sombre Tit, Shovellers, Ruddy Shelduck, Black Kite, Hooded Crow, Graceful Warbler, Kestrel, Sparrowhawk, Black Stork, Quail, Black Franklin, Lesser Grey Shrike, Griffin Vultures, Syrian Woodpecker, Long Legged Buzzard, Blackstart, Spanish Sparrows, Raven, Wheatear, Desert Finch and many others. A fair number of unusual birds were seen on Mt. Hermon which reaches 8000 ft and had snow on it. Also seen were terrapins, Koypu and the Rock Hyrax.

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COSTA RICA : Keith Corbett & Brian Wetton 12th March

Both Keith and Brian visited Costa Rica last year. A country the size of Wales, it has some 850 bird species on its list. The people, were very friendly, though often poor, with many of them living in wooden huts with zinc roofs. Costa Rica is conservation conscious but whilst some 80% of the country was forest in the 50's, now only 20% remains, though much of this is National Parks.

Brian commented that many of the flowers are either orange or yellow with very few blue varieties. Some of the ant population give a nasty bite which lays you low for 36 hours with painful glands. Observations were made of both the three toed and two toed sloth. In addition to many dragonflies and insects a 4ft boa constrictor and vampire bats were also seen. The commonest birds were black and king vultures. Included on the impressive list was the ringed kingfisher, which is the world's largest kingfisher, humming birds lizards, turtles and many moths of which there are some 9000 species so far recorded. Tropical butterflies were also abundant.

The talk afforded an excellent opportunity for members to share the experience of natural history in a region few of us are able to visit.

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Chairman Alan Heath contributed the above information on the last two meetings of our 1989/90 Winter Programme.

A QUESTION OF GALLS by Norah Knight

Some of you may remember that I brought some very peculiar acorns to one of our meetings last November. Mr Bert Hall was our speaker at that meeting and I hoped that he would be able to identify them but he was as puzzled as I was, never having seen anything like them before. On the side of each acorn cup was a nobbly, woody, cup-shaped excrescence. I had gathered these acorns in Somerset where I first found them on one oak tree which was reputed to be planted by Mr Gladstone, then later, on several other oak trees.

A short time after our November meeting I was listening as is my wont on Sunday afternoons, to 'Gardeners' Question Time'. Someone asked a question about acorns with abnormal growths on them which corresponded exactly to the ones I have described. Dr. Stephan Buczacki supplied the answer. These growths are called knopper galls and they are made by the acorn cup gall wasp. This is a continental species which has spread northwards from the continent during the last thirty years. As far as I know they have not reached the Midlands yet but we can expect to see them in the future.

Oak trees are host to a large number of gall wasps, each species of which cause the formation of a characteristic type of gall on a particular part of the tree, - knopper galls on the acorn cups, spangle galls on the leaves. The female wasp inserts its long ovipositor into the plant tissue and lays the egg which hatches into larva and the plant tissue around it begins to grow faster than normal. The gall continues to grow with the larva which feeds on the plant tissue and pupates into an adult inside the gall.

Oak apple galls are particularly interesting. The wasps that hatch from the oak apples lay their eggs in the roots of the oak tree producing root galls from which hatch wasps that lay their eggs in the buds of the oak tree to produce more oak 'apples'.

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Our Summer Programme outings were quite well patronized with the trips to Slimbridge and the 'Butterfly' garden at Heage easily the most popular. The two joint outings and indoor meeting with Groundwork Trust were successful but LENS members were greatly outnumbered on these occasions.

Our indoor meeting on 23rd April was very interesting and enjoyable, with a video of Sandra Slade's visit to New Zealand. I think everyone was very envious of her month long trip.

Sandra, her husband and John and myself did our usual Easter stint as marshalls for the N.W.T's annual fund-raising event at Wollaton Hall. Any other members willing to help next year would be most welcome.

Fay Blackburn

On Monday 14th May Joyce and George led a party on a 4½ mile walk, beginning at the Carpenter's Arms. It was a very enjoyable evening walk, we just managed to arrive back before dark. We were very pleased to see and hear a pair of mating curlew. A list of other birds seen is below, along with the list of plants

Greater Stitchwort	Sparrowhawk
Bluebell	Curlew
Meadow Buttercup	Woodpigeon
Bulbous Buttercup	Robin
Shepherd's Purse	Rook
Red Campion	Wren (H)
Horsetail	Blackbird
Meadow Foxtail	Willow Warbler
Gorze	Jay
White Deadnettle	Mallard
Sheep sorrel	Great Tit
Ribwort Plantain	Blue Tit
Ladysmock	Coot
Cow Parsley	Great Crested Grebe (on nest)
Creeping Thistle	Canada Geese
Fineapple Weed	Blackheaded Gull
Ground Ivy	Jackdaw
Speedwell	Cuckoo (H)
Garlic Mustard	Yellow Hammer (H)
Bracken	
Dock	
Birdsfoot Trefoil	
Woodsage	
Hogweed	
Aram Lily	Rabbit
Elder	
Reedmace	
Yellow Archangel	
Ryegrass	
Goosegrass	
Pignut	
Wormwood	
Bush Vetch	

WILD FLOWER WALK WITH GROUNDWORK TRUST - 27 May 1990

Fumitory	Small Heath
Fennel	Cinnabar Moth
Ragwort	
Comfry	
Lady Smock	
Ribwort Plantain	
Woody Nightshade (Bittersweet)	
Great Cellandine	
Cleavers	
Medick	
Cutleaf Cranesbill	
Mallow	
Foxglove	
Poppy	

Our winter programme 1990/91 commenced with a talk and slide show by Clive Haley who used to be a member of LENS and gave talks on Members' Evenings. He also used to be a warden at Shipley Park but has now moved onto Bestwood Country Park, which formed part of the subject for the evenings talk. The latter part of the evenings entertainment (for that was what it turned out to be) was 'Hedgehogs', Clive was recently described as an 'expert' on hedgehogs on the TV programme 'Midlands Today'. An account of his talk is given by Alan Heath.

BESTWOOD COUNTRY PARK and HEDGEHOGS - Clive Haley

Excellent slides were shown of the Bestwood Country Park area which was once owned by the Duke of St. Albans who in turn gave it to Nell Gwyn, but is now owned by Gedling Borough Council. There are some 250 acres of Woodland and 200 acres of grassland, which is rich in wildlife, especially birds, which include Tree Creeper and three species of Woodpecker.

Clive explained that there was an extensive educational programme at Bestwood and some 18,000 children had taken advantage of this during last year. In fact Clive stated that a considerable portion of his time as warden was devoted to promoting all aspects of Natural History to school children.

The second part of the evening featured 'Stookie' the hedgehog which Clive has reared. We saw 'Stookie' when Clive first found her, since then she has become something of a celebrity, featuring in the educational programmes on school visits.

Advice was given on how to look after hedgehogs and we were told that in order to survive the winter a hedgehog must weigh 20oz. 'Stookie' now weighs 45oz!! Hedgehogs should not be handled too much as they can become quite tame and will be unable to return to the wild.

If the task of rearing an under-weight hedgehog is taken on the following must be noted - it must firstly be de-fleaed with a bird flea spray, not those recommended for cats and dogs. As hedgehogs are messy animals there will be a lot of cleaning out to do, with newspapers needed in abundance! These will be required to line a strong box which will also need a hot water bottle in twice a day. Clive found that a diet of Pedigree Chum puppy food, supplemented with bran and multivitamins once a week seemed to work well. The hedgehog should be allowed to eat as much as it needs to put on weight for the winter. Hedgehogs, along with dormice and bats, are the only mammals to hibernate in Britain.

Hedgehogs have been around for a long time and actually pre-date the Woolly Mammoth and Sabre-toothed Tiger.

'Stookie' is now completely tame and cannot be returned to the wild as Clive had originally intended.

1st October 1990

Richard Shaw works for the RSPB and travels over much of the country giving talks to various organisations, including the Young Ornithologist's Club.

His talk this time dwelt on the different ways that birds of prey are persecuted. How numbers have dwindled and how some species have learnt to adapt to different situations, including the kestrel, which can be seen hunting over the central reservations and side strips of motorways. We were informed how the use of DDT has caused a decline in bird population by passing through the food chain, often causing egg shells to be too thin, so that they break before the chick can hatch.

In the second part of the evening we were shown a film of the life of the Short-eared Owl.

A raffle was held in aid of the RSPB which was won by Marion Smith. Many questions were answered at the end of the evening, then Alan Heath thanked the speaker for a very interesting evening.

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TOADSTOOL TRAIL - 14th October 1990

Erewash Groundwork Trust visit to Dale Abbey - Leaders George and
Joyce Smith

A circular route was taken leading through Hermits Wood across Pastureland back to Dale. Hermits Wood is mostly Oak and Beech with some Lime and Ash, we also noted a young Hornbeam fruiting. A great number of fungi were seen as light rain had followed a long hot, dry spell.

Honey fungus and shaggy ink caps were the most common and there was evidence that the number of field mushrooms had declined sharply during the day. Wood barley was also identified in the wood. There are over 3,000 types of larger fungi in Britain and many of these are edible when cooked. Parboiling before use will dissolve out the toxins, this is safer than using the heat of the frying pan, though this can be applied afterwards.

After a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon it was good to know that the Gateway Centre was available for refreshments afterwards.

LENS members may be interested to know that the Groundwork Trust have produced a walk leaflet with a 3¼ mile walk from Dale Abbey to Kirk Hallam, a sample leaflet can be seen on the notice board.

Species list with apologies for any incorrect indentifications.

Tricholomataceae - greasy clubfoot, russet shank, clustered toughshank velvet shank, *Mycena galopus*, honey fungus, wood blewitt.

Russulaceae - milkcap, yellow *Russula*

Pluteaceae - fawn *pluteus*

Coprinaceae - shaggy inkcap, trooping crumblecap, glistening inkcap little Japanese umbrella, grey mottlegill

Cortinariaceae - *Pholiota adiposa*, *Cortinarius* sp.

Agaricaceae - field mushroom

Strophariaceae - sulphur tuft, dung roundhead, liberty cap.

Lepiotaceae - shaggy parasol, *Lepiota (Clypeolaria) large-ish* parasol, with very faint smell.

Helotiaceae - *Cudoniella acicularis*

Lycoperdaceae - Puffballs - *Bovista plumbea*, *Lycoperdon perlatum* pear-shaped puffball, giant puff ball.

Phallaceae - stinkhorn

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Fungi was also noted at the following place:-

West Park - 27.10.90

Pleurotus (dryinus) - very large gilled bracket on poplar tree.

Sulphur tuft - a very common inedible fungus in fox covert.

Armillaria mellea - honey fungus another common one, this is lethal to the host.

Toton Park - 1.11.90

Field mushroom, horse mushroom, sulphurtuft, shaggy parasol, weeping widow, little Japanese umbrella, the blusher, brown wood mushroom.

Long Eaton Library - Tricholoma populinum, sulphur tuft, common inkcap

Marion Smith

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Marion Smith has offered the following information - Marsh Speedwell was present at Forbes Hole flowering at the same time as the water violet.

Dames violet found at Risley Glebe (this is a crucifer by the way!)

There is lesser spearwort at the fox covert, at least two plants.

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The AGM took place on 15th October 1990, it was followed by a talk given by Mrs Pat Brassley on the 'Wildlife of Derbyshire'.

Pat Brassley is the conservation officer for Derbyshire, her illustrated talk showed her work and the wildlife of the county.

The landscape of 6000 years ago was compared with that of today, the obvious difference was the loss of trees.

Sites which have taken since the last ice age to develop can be destroyed almost overnight by engineers/planners. There are some

1800 sites of special interest in the county, of these, about 190 are in the Erewash Borough Council's Area. Habitats are threatened from different angles. As we demand cleaner milk and meat, water

troughs are used instead of ponds, these then fall into disuse. The trust has helped with bats of which there has been a 50% decline

over the last 10 - 15 years, in contrast the problem of Canada Geese was discussed as they are increasing at the rate of 8 - 10% each

year. Reference was made to the Ash Tip at Lock Lane, the Fox Covert on Long Eaton Park, Forbe's Hole, and various plants and where to find

them. The importance of keeping records up to date was stressed, an ongoing task to which LENS makes a valuable contribution.

Officers elected

	Chairman	-	Alan Heath
	Secretary	-	Marion Smith
Meetings	Secretary	-	Judy & John Langford
	Treasurer	-	Norah Knight
	Recorder	-	John Blackburn
	Auditor/Editor	-	Fay Blackburn
	WEA Liaison	-	Hilary Forber

Committee

Fay Draper, Brian Phillips, Dennis Truman
Carol Willan, John Blackburn

The illustrated talk showed how Well Dressing had begun at Etwall, some twenty years ago, to its development at the present time. Strong boards to support the displays were the first thing required. Timbers from the old cricket pavilion were found to be ideal, these had to be immersed in water at first, this would then keep the clay moist. Different materials are used, obviously flowers, but no wild ones, only garden flowers, coffee beans, parsley, alder cones sunflower seeds and many more. As the Well Dressing groups at Etwall are fairly new, they are not obliged to use religious themes. Two recent themes have been 'Green and Pleasant Land' and 'Racial Harmony'. Etwall now dress eight wells each year and the displays at least equal others in the towns and villages of Derbyshire. Money raised is given to charity.

Dennis Truman thanked the speaker and said that members were most impressed by the care and dedication given to produce such high standards in the displays.

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The following sightings were recorded by Judy and John Langford, Carol Willan, Karen Bidgood, Marion Smith and Fay & John Blackburn.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE	2prs + 5y	Sawley Bridges/Weir	11.7.90
" " "	20+	Attenborough	31.7.90
" " "	4	Sawley Bridges/Weir	7.10.90
" " "	2/7	Derwent Mouth Area	7/23.10.90
CORMORANT	1	Church Wilne & Quarries	7.10.90
"	1	Thrumpton Ferry Area	7.10.90
"	9	Derwent Mouth Area	23.10.90
GREY HERON	5	Crowders Eaves	11.7.90
" "	8	Attenborough	31.7.90
" "	12	River Trent	7.10.90
" "	1/4	Derwent Mouth Area	14/23.10.90
" "	1	Barkers' Pond	Oct/Nov
MUTE SWAN	15+	Attenborough	31.7.90
" "	5	Derwent Mouth Area	22.10.90
GREY LAG GOOSE	4	Attenborough	13/31.7.90
PINK FOOTED GOOSE	?	"	13.7.90
CANADA GOOSE	10	Thrumpton Ferry Area	7.10.90
MALLARD	27	Barkers' Pond	Sept onwards
TEAL	1/2	Derwent Mouth Area	7/23.10.90
TUFTED DUCK	3	Attenborough	31.7.90
" "	1	Derwent Mouth Area	23.10.90
" "	4/6	Barkers' Pond	Nov/Dec
POCHARD	1	Attenborough	31.7.90
RUDDY DUCK	1/3	Attenborough	30.7 & 15.8
" "	1	Derwent Mouth Area	14.10.90
" "	1	Sawley Bridges	22.10.90
KESTREL	1	Derwent Mouth Area	7.10.90
"	1	Breaston	1.12.90
MOORHEN	4/6	Barkers' Pond	6.9 & 1.12
"	Several	Derwent Mouth Area	23.10.90
COOT	8 + 4y	Barkers' Pond	6.9.90
"	Several	Derwent Mouth Area	23.10.90
GOLDEN PLOVER	350 c	Derwent Mouth Area	14.10.90
LAPWING	400+	Attenborough	31.7.90
"	1	Derwent Mouth Area	14.10.90

COMMON SANDPIPER	1	Crowders Eaves	11.7.90
" "	2	Attenborough	31.7.90
SNIPE	1	Attenborough	15.8.90
" "	4	Thrumpton Ferry Area	7.10.90
BLACKHEADED GULL	Several	Derwent Mouth Area	23.10.90
" " "	30+	Barkers' Pond	1.12.90
COMMON TERN	2 + 3y	Attenborough	31.7.90
" "	10	"	"
BLACK TERN	Several	"	27.7.90
TAWNY OWL	1	Trent College	3.6.90
KINGFISHER	1	Sawley Bridges/Weir	11.7.90
" "	1	Attenborough	31.7.90
" "	1	River Trent	7.10.90
" "	2	Derwent Mouth Area	14.10.90
GREAT SPOTTED W. PECKER	1	West Park	25.5.90
" " "	1	Derwent Mouth Area	14.10.90
MEADOW PIPIT	1/3	" " "	7/22.10.90
PIED WAGTAIL	1	Trent Collge	13.5.90
" "	1	Derwent Mouth Area	7 & 14.10.90
" "	10	" " "	22.10.90
" "	1/2	Risley	NOV/Dec
GREY WAGTAIL	1	Attenborough	31.7.90
" "	1/3	Derwent Mouth Area	7/23.10.9P
" "	1	West Park	7.10.90
SEDGE WARBLER	1/2	Attenborough	30/31.7.90
BLACKCAP	1	Attenborough	31.7.90
WILLOW WARBLER	1	Trent College	31.7.90
CHIFFCHAFF	1	River Trent	7.10.90
FIELD FARE	Few	Derwent Mouth Area	22.10.90
REDWING	"	" " "	"
SONG THRUSH	"	" " "	"
MISTLE THRUSH	"	" " "	"
" "	3	Risley	27.11.90
LONG-TAILED TIT	5/12	Derwent Mouth Area	7/22.10.90
" " "	12	Barkers' Pond	Oct
WILLOW TIT	1/2	Derwent Mouth Area	7/22.10.90
TREECREEPER	1	" " "	22.10.90
WREN	1	Toton Park	12.11.90
" "	1	Barkers' Pond	2.12.90
BULLFINCH	4	Risley	23.11.90
TREESPARROW	1	Derwent Mouth Area	7.10.90
REED BUNTING	1	Toton Park	12.11.90
GOLDFINCH	50+	Toton Park	18.10.90
" "	1	" "	12.11.90
MAGPIE	1	" "	12,11.90
" "	2	Barkers' Pond	1.11.90
SPOTTED FLY CATCHER	1	Trent College	April/July

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Next meetings

7th January - Dr Alan Willmot - The Flowers of Crete
 21st " - Mr Arthur Bull - Birds of Rutland Water

P.S. Noted at Attenborough by Carol Willan during July, Bee Orchid, Red Bartsia, Butterfly, Comma & Green-veined White.