

LENS BULLETIN

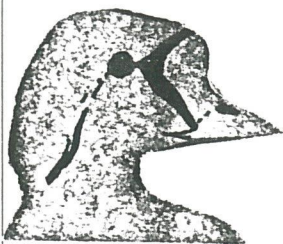
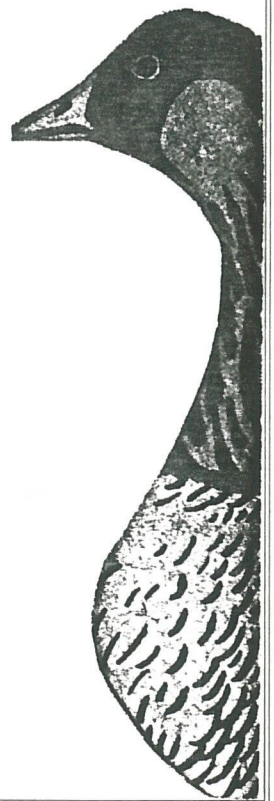
27

No. 27

LONG EATON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

SPRING : 1993

CHAIRMAN : ALAN HEATH
SECRETARY : CAROLE WILLAN
MEETINGS SECRETARY : GEORGE SMITH
TREASURER : NORAH KNIGHT



TS CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

I am sure you are all pleased with the new venue for our indoor meetings which is due to the efforts of Karen Bidgood. It is likely that we will continue to meet at Trent College, at least for the foreseeable future. Many thanks Karen.

As you may all know, the society carries a Public Liability Insurance. The increasing premium for this has caused us some concern and the latest increase is from £65 p.a. to £100 p.a. It is felt that we should let this lapse but I give notice that the society accepts no responsibility for loss of property, damage to property, injury or other claims made against it howsoever caused. This applies to all activities including the indoor meetings, outings, conservation activities etc.

Fay Blackburn has in the past typed and prepared our Bulletin. Due to other commitments she is no longer able to continue and the typing will be shared amongst us. Your chairman is typing this so any errors are entirely his fault! We thank Fay for all her hard work on our behalf. The Bulletin will continue to be published as and when sufficient material is available to produce one. It is up to you!

Alan Heath

OMITTED FROM PREVIOUS BULLETIN -

16th May 1992

DALE ABBEY

Visit on the morning on a fine warm day and led by George and Joyce Smith

PLANTS :

Old Man's Beard
Cow Parsley
White Deadnettle
Red Deadnettle
Yellow Archangel
Great Stitchwort
Red Campion
Field Maple
Black Bryony
Arum Lily
Wild Pansy
Meadow Buttercup
Bulbous Buttercup
Common Mouse-ear
Ribwort
Dogs Mercury
Meadow Cranesbill
Daisy
Red Clover
Hogweed
Ground Ivy
Oxford Ragwort
Violet
Germander Speedwell
Chickweed
Tufted Vetch
Gorze
Groundsel

BIRDS :

Skylark (H)
Yellow Hammer
Crow
Blackbird
Swallow
Magpie
Cuckoo (H)
Starling

Note : (H) means heard but not seen.

BUTTERFLIES :

Orange-Tip
Small Tortoiseshell
Green-veined White
Peacock
Holly Blue

THE NAMING OF PLANTS

I know that the 19th century Swedish naturalist, Linnaeus, was the person who devised the international nomenclature of plants, but I did not realize, until I read John Langford's article in the last bulletin, that Linnaeus was also responsible for the method of naming all branches of natural history.

The system he devised is binomial. The generic name comes first and is always written with a capital letter and the specific name comes second and is written with a small initial letter. All plants of the same genus have common characteristics, eg. all plants of the genus *Euphorbia* have stems with milky fluid, leaves which are alternate and untoothed, flowers which are yellowish green with no petals or sepals, fruits which are rounded and stalked.

Linnaeus did not invent all the scientific names; many were in use over 2000 years ago in the days of Ancient Greece and Rome, some were added at the time of the Renaissance and others have been added since. It is most interesting to study the derivation of these scientific names. Some of the generic names are descriptive eg. *Stitchwort* and *Chickweed* both belong to the genus *Stellaria* from the latin word "stella" a star; *Galanthus*, snowdrop is so named from its milk-white flowers (Greek "gala" milk and "anthos" flower). Some names relate to the use of the plant, eg. *Saponaria*, soapwort, from the latin "sapo" soap. Other names relate to a place or season. *Arabis*, rockcress, is a native of Arabia and *Frimula* is so named from its early flowering (primus is latin for first) Plants named in medieval or modern times often commemorate a person, usually a great botanist or patron of botany eg. *Lobelia* after L'Obel, a Flemish botanist.

Each genus is subdivided into species, the specific name usually being an adjective. Each species has certain characteristics that mark it off from all other species. *Stachys* is the generic name for woundwort from *L. stachus*, a spike, referring to its inflorescence.

<i>S. arvensis</i> is Field Woundwort.	<i>L. Arvum</i> , field
<i>S. palustris</i> is Marsh Woundwort.	<i>L. palus</i> , a marsh
<i>S. sylvatica</i> is Hedge Woundwort.	<i>L. sylva</i> , wood
<i>S. officinalis</i> is Betony.	<i>L. officina</i> , shop

referring to the fact that it was sold in shops as a medicine.

Latin and Greek nouns may be masculine, feminine or neuter and adjectives have to agree with their nouns. *L. albus*, white, becomes *alba* in the feminine and *album* is the neuter form, so we have

<i>Lupinus albus</i> ,	white lupin
<i>Bryonia alba</i> ,	white bryony
<i>Sedum album</i> ,	white sedum

The common English names of wild plants have come down to us through the ages and there is a rich legacy of local names. I have read that *Arum maculatum*, the wild arum, has as many as 90 different local names. In this area it is commonly known as cuckoo-pint and lords-and-ladies and occasionally

I have heard it called Jack-in-the-pulpit. Sometimes a common name is used in different parts of the country to apply to completely different flowers. The early purple orchid, lady's smock, wood sorrel and wild arum all flower at the time of the cuckoo's arrival and all have been dubbed "cuckoo flower" in various parts of Britain. So common names are unreliable and can be confusing. Also they convey no idea of the relationship of one plant to another. No-one could deduce from the names primrose, oxlip and cowslip that these flowers are closely related, but the scientific names, *Primula elatior* and *Primula veris* immediately show they belong to the genus *Primula*.

Both scientific and common names have their uses. Scientific names are intelligible to botanists all over the world and each name refers to one particular plant, while common names are familiar to the ordinary person and embody the ideas and imaginations of our ancestors.

After preparing this article I heard the panel of the radio programme "Gardeners' Question Time" discussing the pros and cons for using scientific names of plants and one of them recounted an amusing experience. He was pointing out that there is not a standard pronunciation for the latin names which can lead to confusion. Once when he was working for the Forestry Commission he took some visitors round a plantation of pine trees, *L. pinus*. One of the visitors was from an Eastern European country and his pronunciation of *pinus* led to great embarrassment among the ladies!

Anyone wishing to study this subject further would be well advised to obtain a copy of a paperback "Key to the Names of British Plants" by R.D. Macleod. Unfortunately the book is not obtainable from bookshops but by writing directly to - Mrs R.H. Doust, 121 Warren Drive, Hornchurch RM12 4RI. It is a companion book to the one on Birds mentioned by John Langford and there are two more in the series, on Butterflies and Moths, and on Fish, Mammals, Amphibians and Reptiles.

Norah Knight

NEWS FROM BARKER'S POND

The two adult swans along with their seven fully grown offspring are showing a marked reluctance to leave Barker's Pond. According to the R.S.P.C.A. Officers who visited the pond, the reason is that they are very happy here and obviously very well fed, (they know which side their bread is buttered, both sides I shouldn't wonder, as apparently one lady puts honey and salmon paste on some of the bread!)

There may be a problem for anything nesting on the pond this year, since all last year's growth of reeds was pulled up by the swans continually relining their nest. We are working on a possible line of action and will let you know in the next Bulletin if it is successful

After being in eclipse and growing new feathers, Terry the Tufty can now fly! We were very pleased with his full rehabilitation but sad when he flew off to 'fresh waters'. He comes back to visit us occasionally, waiting on the water by our side gate for a feed!

We now have two other characters on the pond, Desmond and Daphne, two ducks, the female an all white Aylesbury and the male a large Muscovy type. A client at the Vets' where my daughter works, said that she was "fed up with them" and intended to release them at Attenborough Nature Reserve. The vet wasn't sure how they would cope in the wild as they were pets with clipped wings and suggested instead they should be taken to Barker's Pond so that we could keep an eye on them.

We didn't think we would have any problems, as there were mallards on the pond but the swans had other ideas, and promptly sent them off the water. We had to charge round to the other side of the pond with the cat baskets in the pitch dark! We found Daphne easily but Desmond was not to be found. I spent an uneasy night's sleep fully expecting him to be killed, either by the swans, cats or the fox. I need not have worried, there he was next morning, holding his own with all the nine swans!!! We decided to let Daphne on the water again, but again the swans came after her. Perhaps with her being white they thought she was a swan (they never let any other swans stay on the pond and the bailiff and John have had to come to the rescue of intruders on a number of occasions, once when the cob was trying to kill a 'foreign' young bird.) Desmond was so pleased to see her though and their re-union was quite touching. However, after perseverance by us and protection by him she was finally accepted on to the pond.

Since this episode roles have changed on the water. The Cob is no longer king on 'Swan Lake', Desmond is Boss on the 'Duck Pond'. When the R.S.P.C.A. Officer visited Barker's he remarked that he had never before seen a Cob give way to a duck, saying, "He's an aggressive little b..... isn't he?" His other explanation was that the Cob is perhaps not of an aggressive nature, and therefore tolerates the ducks behaviour, but this theory doesn't hold water when other swans 'drop in', as already explained.

At the moment they are all one big happy family but we are wondering what will happen when the adults want to mate again this year, as traditionally they always send the young off..... It will be interesting to see what happens.

Fay Blackburn

RARE PLANTS UP-DATE

The last comprehensive flora of Nottinghamshire was published in 1963; the ensuing decades have seen many changes in the land-use of the county, and whilst the Trust has done its best to keep track of the changes in our flora and fauna, its attentions have largely been focussed on its own reserves.

Nottinghamshire has, or at least *had* in the 1960s, a surprising number of rare plant species, including two which are listed in the Red Data Book, a list of the 317 rarest or most threatened plants in the country. Only a small proportion of these species, unfortunately, are present on sites where the Trust can ensure their protection, manage them appropriately and/or monitor their populations.

The current status of many of our rare species is uncertain. As well as managing its own reserves, the Trust is in a position to influence the management of land throughout the county; one priority of this management should be the conservation of rare species wherever they occur. In order for our advice to be effective, we urgently need to know the up-to-date status of these species.

Several County Wildlife Trusts, including our neighbours in Derbyshire and Lincolnshire, are currently involved in the production of County Rare Plant Registers, helped by guidelines drawn up by the Botanical Society of the British Isles. The 30th anniversary of the publication of the Howitts' Flora of Nottinghamshire would seem an ideal opportunity to re-assess the status of our own botanical rarities.

To test whether or not this project is feasible, we are seeking records of the plants listed below. They represent some of the more conspicuous and easily identifiable rarities found in the county.

So, if you have any records of the plants in the following list, or any other plants you consider to be rare in Nottinghamshire, however old they may be, please contact **Steve Alton** at the Trust office.

Spring crocus	<i>Crocus purpureus</i>
Meadow clary	<i>Salvia pratensis</i>
Field garlic	<i>Allium oleraceum</i>
Stinking hellebore	<i>Helleborus foetidus</i>
Mousetail	<i>Myosurus minimus</i>
Mountain currant	<i>Ribes alpinum</i>
Golden dock	<i>Rumex maritimus</i>
Large-leaved lime	<i>Tilia platyphyllos</i>

Steve Alton
Assistant Conservation Officer

WHOLE-DAY OUTING TO KINGSBURY WATER PARK -

Saturday 7th November 1992

Fourteen LENS members enjoyed a good winter day's birdwatching at Kingsbury Water Park, the venue being new to almost all members.

From the main focal point of the Park, Interpretative Centre, shop, toilets, picnic tables etc., near the village of Marston, main paths run off through willow carr etc. to take the visitor out to several large ponds left since gravel extraction. These held large numbers of winter duck, including pochard, shoveler wigeon, goldeneye, gadwall, good views of which were obtained, whilst the margins had lapwing, grey heron, cormorant, common sandpiper (just one) and snipe (just one). Land birds seen included Great spotted woodpecker, long-tailed tit, kestrel, collared dove and (heard only) willow tit. There was a large flock of canada geese plus some dozen greylags.

The walk took us round several large pools and over almost to meet the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal at Bodymoor Heath (a most menacing name on a cold November night, I always think!)

After clocking up some 40 species of birds, most of the party went over by car to the large pools beside the railway line (near Kingsbury Junction) where we added another 6 species, namely : Redwing, ruddy duck, little grebe, skylark, meadow pipit, and black swan - the latter most obligingly swimming over to be photographed by our chairman.

Sincere thanks are due to John Blackburn who led the party, and those who conveyed the non-drivers (such as Judy and myself) from to and to Long Eaton.

John Langford

CORRIGENDA :

Two small errors crept into LENS Bulletin No 26, Autumn 1992, and members may like to correct their copies : -

Page 8 : In the last line of Clare's poem, 'taunts' should be 'traunts'.

Page 9 : Gilbert White's famous work was of course "The Natural History of Selbourne"

Sorry! There are no prizes for spotting the deliberate mistakes!

John Langford

I AM SUPERBIN-----

SKIP OF SKIPS-----

LOOK ON MEN, MORTALS, AND DISPOSE-----

-----all your unwanted empty cans - aluminium or tin-----

Through the good office of our friend Gary Wain of Erewash Groundwork Trust, Long Eaton now has a non-selective CAN-BANK ie: all types of aluminium and tin can. Just remove paper label, wash and squash..... The new CAN-BANK (bright blue) is situated in ASDA car park, Midland Street, LONG EATON-almost opposite Police Station. Another is in West Park Leisure Centre Car Park.

So LENS members, please use this new facility, and, of course the bottle banks- and do our bit for Recycling.....

Thanks and Congratulations Gary.....

John Langford.

STUDY OF MICE POPULATION - 1992

Alan Heath

A record was kept of the mice brought home by a cat located near a site off Fields Farm Road, LONG EATON. This site is waste land which adjoins Forbes Hole Nature Reserve and the NGR of the centre is approximately 496/328. The site has numbers of trees, bushes and grass areas with wild flowers and obviously an interesting habitat.

My daughter Karen lives at 51 Nathaniel Road, Long Eaton which is on the other side of Fields Farm Road and she has a male cat which frequents the site. He brings home his 'treasures' and it is therefore possible to get some idea of the local population of mice. He brings the occasional shrew and sometimes a bird or even butterflies. The record here is for MICE and SHREWS.

MICE : (dates : one mouse unless stated)

- January - 1, 6, 10, 12, 13 (2), 14, 15, 16, 17, 26, 27, 28
- February - 1, 2, 4
- March - None
- April - 16, 21, 30
- May - 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 21
- June - 1, 9^o
- July - 1, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 17 (2), 21, 23
- August - 4, 5 (record interrupted due to holidays.
The cat was away for the last two weeks)
- September - 7, 8, 12, 13, 15, 17
- October - 1 (2), 5, 12, 16 (2), 18, 19, 20, 27
- November - 3 (3), 11, 15, 16, 19, 21, 23 (2)
- December - 2, 11, 13, 24, 26, 31

TOTALS :	Jan	13	
	Feb	3	
	Mar	0	
	Apr	3	
	May	8	
	Jun	2	
	Jul	10	
	Aug	2	(half month only)
	Sep	6	
	Oct	10	
	Nov	10	
	Dec	6	

TOTAL 73

SHREWS

One on each of the following days :

April 6, May 26, June 27, July 19 and October 26 : Total 5

RATS

One each on the following days : June 25, July 27 and Oct 12

Total 3

- 7 March 1992 DITCH between Sawley Marina and Shardlow crossing the fields -
Euglena, Synura, Mougeotia, Synedra, Fragellaria, Gomphenema, Rotifer sp.
- 21 March 1992 DITCH by footpath on fields between Breaston and Risley NGR 467/349
Euglena (Abundant) Nais sp., Nematode, Paramecium, Stentor, Canthocamptus.
- 12 April 1992 ELVASTON CASTLE
Pond in Nature Reserve : Euglena, Ulothrix, Cyclops, Chaetophora, Navicular sp. Cypris, Simocephalus.
Butterflies : Holly Blue, Peacock, Comma, Brimstone, Small Tortoiseshell, Small White.
- 18 April 1992 DITCH by footpath on fields between Breaston and Risley NGR 467/349
Nematode, Vaucheria, Ulothrix, Anabaena, Coleps, Surirella Constricta, Canthocamptus, Cyclops, Closterium concavum.
- 20 April 1992 DITCH at same site but on other side of hedge -
Spirostomum, Paramecium, Nais sp.
- 7 May 1992 RISLEY GLEBE
Holly Blue, Green-veined White, Lady Smock, Red Campion, Ransoms, Lesser Cellandine, Bluebell, Robin
- 14 May 1992 RISLEY GLEBE - Orange Tip
- 25 June 1992 RISLEY GLEBE - Speckled Wood, Salad Burnett, Meadow Cranesbill, Yellow Rattle.
- 30 June 1992 WEATHER NOTE : Very heavy rainstorm between 7 and 8 pm during which time 39.1mm (1.54 ins) rain fell causing flash floods in Long Eaton. A total of 60mm (2.36 ins) rain fell in the 24 hours between 7 pm June 30 and 7 pm July 1
- 8 July 1992 EREWASH CANAL SURVEY in conjunction with Erewash Groundwork Trust between Dockholme Lock and Long Eaton Fire Station - NGR 488/352 to 488/330 approx.
Stinging Nettle, White Deadnettle, Red Deadnettle, Bittersweet, White Bryony, White Clover, Silverweed, Great Bindweed, Tufted Vetch, Rosebay Willowherb, Great Hairy Willowherb, Lesser Bindweed, Red Clover, Skullcap (one small region) Hedge Woundwort, Poppy, Honeysuckle, Ragwort, Yellow Water Lily
Mallard, Comma Butterfly, Green-veined white, Gatekeeper, Blue-tailed damselfly, Rhagonycha fulva,
Water Sample near fire station : Leech, various snails inc Limnaea sp., Gammarus, Corixa and Caddis larvae.

WEATHER SUMMARY FOR 1992

PREVAILING WIND	-	WEST
LEAST WIND	-	SOUTH-EAST
WARMEST DAY	86°F	- 29th June
COLDEST DAY	23°F	- 22nd January
WETTEST DAY	2.36 inches in 24 hours with 1½ inches in just one hour.	- 30th June
DRIEST MONTH	-	February
WETTEST MONTH	-	November
DAYS WITH OVER AN INCH OF RAIN IN 24 HRS.		30th June and almost on 30 May and 26 September
TOTAL THUNDERSTORMS	-	6
TOTAL RAIN	-	29.27 inches (743.3 mm)
AVERAGE RAINFALL PER WEEK	-	0.56 inches
TOTAL FOG (8 were in December)	-	16
DAYS WITH FOG ALL DAY	-	3
BAROMETER MAXIMUM	-	31.1 26 January
BAROMETER MINIMUM	-	28.9 2 December
STRONG WINDS (March 12-13, 21 May 8, Aug 30, Sep 6, Nov 2, Dec 2)	-	7
AVERAGE MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE	-	67.9°F
AVERAGE MINIMUM TEMPERATURE	-	34.6°F
DAYS WITH TEMPERATURE OF 80°F OR MORE	-	11 (There were 4 in May, 6 in June and 1 in July)

WEATHER SUMMARY FOR 1992 : recorded at 136 Trowell Grove,
LONG EATON

- January Some rain in the first two weeks and a little sleet. Drier in the second half of the month. Fair amount of fog including two days of fog all day. The highest barometer reading I have ever recorded since my records began in 1960 occurred on the 26th and 27th at 31.1
- February The driest month of the year. It was also rather mild for the time of year.
- March More rain this month but the rainfall is still well below average. Quite windy at times especially on the 12th, 13th and 21st.
- April Rainfall still low though a fair number of wet days. Windy at times.
- May Mid-month was very warm. Some rain in the first two weeks and especially the last two days with two thunderstorms. Almost an inch of rain in 24 hours on the 30th - 31st.
- June Fair amount of rain in first week. Final week was hottest of the year, the highest temperature being reached on the 29th. A severe thunderstorm on the 30th produced the heaviest rainfall ever recorded by me since 1960 with over $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches of rain in an hour. Flash floods occurred and there was nearly $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches of rain in the 24 hour period. This rain brought the rainfall average up to normal for the year.
- July Fair amount of rain this month. Although temperatures were not excessive for July, there were many warm and humid days and nights.
- August Cool with a fair amount of rain. Very windy on the 30th. The rainfall is now above the yearly average for this year.

September A rather wet month especially between the 17th and 26th. Some fog in the last week. Nearly an inch of rain in 24 hours fell on the 26th. A distinct autumn feel at times, especially in the last week.

October A rather cool and wet month. The second week only was dry.

November The wettest month of the year despite the heavy rainfall in June. Wet and windy with some very mild days.

December Most of the rain was in the first half of the month. The second half had frequent frosts, often severe and a considerable amount of fog especially around the Christmas period. Snow on the morning of the 4th did not settle. Of the 16 fogs recorded for the year, 8 of them were in December.

COMMENTS : The Average Maximum Temperature was 2^oF up on the previous year but the Average Minimum Temperature was 2^oF down.

Only 11 days had temperatures of 80^oF or more and a temperature of 90^oF was not reached this year. No measureable snow was recorded.

Recorded at 136 Trowell Grove, LONG EATON

Alan Heath

BIRD RECORDINGS

GREY WAGTAIL	1	20.11.92	Garden F & J Blackburn
PIED WAGTAIL	12	Early Feb 93	English Martyrs School
GOLD FINCH	5	27.11.92	Garden of F & J Blackburn seen eating lavender seeds
GREENFINCH	4-6	Throughout winter	Garden of F & J Blackburn
CHAFFINCH	4-8	"	"
BLUETIT	6	"	"
GREAT TIT	4-6	"	"
LONG TAILED TIT	6	17.12.92	"
LONG TAILED TIT	6	Throughout January 93	Risley
TREE CREEPER	1	December 92	Risley
TUFTER DUCK	6-9	Barkers Pond	
GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER	1	January	Risley - Stayed about 30 minutes and pecking at tree.
BLACK CAP	1	10.12.92	John & Judy Langford

BAT

Early sighting of a Pipistrelle (?) bat at Barkers Pond at 4.40 pm on Sunday, 7th February 1993. A very mild, calm day had obviously brought the bat out hunting for insects over the water.

LENS / GROUNDWORK TRUST walk from Sawley to Shardlow
and Return -

Saturday 9th January 1993

Eight LENS members and friends braved the rather unpromising weather of Saturday 9th January for this walk along the Rivers Trent and Derwent up to Shardlow. As often happens, a showery start to the day gave way to a clear lunchtime and afternoon, affording us quite a good day of winter birdwatching.

Five or six species of duck, Great Crested and Little Grebe, Field and Grey Wagtail, Fieldfare and Redwing were some of the species seen, which totalled 43 by the time we returned to Sawley. The only waders were a flock of Lapwing and 2 Redshank. Some members spotted a Kingfisher just downstream of the Leicester Pipe Bridge.

After a nice pub lunch at the New Inn, Shardlow, we had a short walk round part of the village, viewing architecture of the canal era, etc., and saw the former "Canal Tavern" which is situated on the towpath between Shardlow Lock and the River Trent. This hostelry, long closed as a pub, was immortalised by the writer L.T.C. Rolt in his superb canal book "Narrow Boat", first published in 1944. The following extract will convey to LENS members Rolt's view of the Shardlow of nearly 50 years ago : a classic piece of canal writing.

John Langford

SINGING SHARDLOW AND STORM AT FINDERN

THE wharves and warehouses of Shardlow constitute the eastern terminus of Brindley's great canal, and the village has sprung up around them in the same way that Crewe has grown up beside its railway yards. Here the parallel ends, however, for, when Crewe was built, the new industrial order was already firmly established, and the short-sighted aim of immediate commercial gain had finally swept away the last remnants of permanence and grace from architecture. Shardlow dates from the dawn of the new era, and the canal buildings bear witness to the fact that these qualities had not then been lost. The masons of a century and a half ago built them to endure, and endowed them also with the dying spark of that fire which once made the humblest barn a thing of beauty.

One large, three-storeyed warehouse, which in modern hands would have been a featureless barrack, was miraculously transformed by a combination of detail so subtle that it was difficult to discover why it should be so satisfying to the eye. Doubtless the secret lay in the pitch of the roof, in the shape and spacing of the windows, and in the colour of the wide-morticed bricks, while a low, wide arch under the foundations, beneath which the boats could run to unload, gave the whole ponderous mass an unsubstantial air which called to mind the fairy-like, painted castles of the boat cabins. In the same manner, round-headed doorways and a curious projecting gable end lent character and charm to an old Malthouse adjoining 'The Malt Shovel' inn.

We found no less than three canal-side inns at Shardlow, each with its staunch little clientele of 'regulars' playing each other at darts, or setting the affairs of villages and nations to rights over a

pint of Burton ale. No club is more exclusive than the bar of a village inn, and perhaps it was because we respected this fact that we were greeted with kindness and natural courtesy, two qualities which the townsman of today has lost.

Least prepossessing externally, but most entertaining of the trio, was 'The Canal Tavern', beside Shardlow Lock. By day the jovial landlord of this inn plies his trade as a blacksmith, but in the evenings he turns musician, settling his burly figure onto the stool before the old bar piano and rattling off all the old familiar songs, simple, sentimental or bawdy, while his patrons sing themselves hoarse. We heard the strains of 'Daisy Bell' drifting over the water long before we reached the house, and when we entered we were at once invited to swell the chorus of singers who lined the benches round the walls, with their pint glasses set before them. The company was representative of both sexes and every age, from a party of village youths who evidently preferred an evening's full-blooded entertainment at the 'Tavern' to two hours synthetic sentiment in the cinema, to an old lady who, we were informed in a stage whisper, was over eighty years of age and would, when the mood was upon her, dance in the clear space between the tables, footing it as lightly and nimbly as a girl. Unfortunately this spectacle was denied us, but it was enough to watch her as she entered heart and soul into the singing, with a harsh but surprisingly tuneful voice, like a male falsetto, nodding her head and swinging her glass in time to the music. Despite innumerable wrinkles and an almost total lack of teeth, her features were wonderfully firm and youthful, while her hair was as dark and lustrous as her eyes.

After several songs in chorus, notably a long and bawdy version of 'Old King Cole', with a rousing refrain which echoed to the rafters, we were treated to a solo by the local lock-keeper, a swarthy, handsome fellow in his early thirties, who gave a most able rendering of 'Old Macdonald' with great fluency and spirit. Then, acquiescing coyly to insistent requests, the landlady obliged with a very sentimental ditty, sung in a quavering contralto, which drew silent tears from the old lady.

Meanwhile the drawing and carrying of beer were entrusted, with delightful informality, to voluntary helpers, most notable among these being an elderly engine-driver. 'Uncle Jack', as he was affectionately called, bustled untiringly to and fro in his shirt sleeves, singing lustily, a cloth cap perched on the back of his silvery head. His rosy countenance radiated benevolent good humour in a perpetual grin, and his blue eye was as sharp and quizzical as a robin's.

For all its mediocre appearance, the landlord and patrons have brought 'The Canal Tavern' nearer to the spirit of an older and happier rural past than all the 'olde innes' with their sham timbering and bogus brasses. The scene in the bar would have delighted Hogarth or Rabelais; it swept the imagination into that past when the countrymen of England were still merry, to the days before the repressive effects of Puritanism and the Enclosure Acts had, between them, contrived to kill the spontaneity and break the ties of the rural communities. It was with genuine regret that we took our leave of this jovial company, and on the morrow looked back until a bend in the canal hid the wharves and inns of Shardlow from our sight.





OUR DAY OUT.....

L.E.N.S TRIP TO WELNEY 13.2.93.....

7.10 AM Saturday morning warm and comfortable in bed. Shall I stay there or make a bold statement by leaping out and getting ready for the L.E.N.S trip to WELNEY WILDFOWL REFUGE ?. HERE I GO dressed and ready (in my thickest things) within the hour. Clutching rucksack filled with binoculars, birdbook, sandwiches and flask I hurry to meet the gang. An excited group huddles together at the corner of College Street, waiting for the big red bus, it arrives and we're off, picking up other members on route; 32 of us in all. We travel towards Grantham and it's foggy so not much to see from the window, but there's plenty to chat about on the bus. Travelling for about 1½ hours one begins to look forward to the coffee stop. The bus pulls into AJ'S and in we troup coffee and toast the order of the day. Much refreshed we get back on the bus travelling on through March. Soon we are at Welney, still foggy. The bus driver manoeuvres his vehicle backwards into the parking place winning much admiration. Out we clamber heading towards the gift shop area, where we pay our entrance fees and buy guides of the area. Off to the hides all extremities (except faces) well wrapped. It's almost 12 o'clock feeding time for the birds so we're in luck. A man comes along with a barrow of what looks like corn and throws shovel fulls out for the birds, who are eager for their meal. Much pushing, flapping of wings, pecking, some diving, some falling out with their neighbour, a tremendous sight of Whooper Swans, Berwick Swans and Mute Swans, Pochard and Wigeon, a few others too. We are very close in the hides so the view is excellent. I still have a lot of difficulty identifying Whooper and Berwick swans; it's the beak I know but there are several variations which makes things more complicated; never-the-less a joyous sight. Time gallops on, more hides to visit, it's very muddy underfoot so have grown several inches by the time the last hide is reached. Another sight of interest is the beautiful ochre colour of the lichen growing on a tree. We also notice Jew's Ear fungi growing on the same tree. A group of snowdrops (maids of February) hang their heads in pure white splendour. We find an umbellifer out, not sure which, possibly Hemlock; Ground Ivy also in flower.

All too soon it is 3 o'clock and the coach is due to leave at 3.30pm. Just time to wash our boots in the trough provided and make for the cafe for a steaming hot cup of tea before our journey home, 3.30pm and we're all aboard. Much chattering "did you see this ?" etc. a list was made of all the species of birds seen 44 in all someone said.... It's still foggy. Another stop at AJ'S for more tea and toasted tea cakes (sensible outing this). Homeward bound relaxed, warm and happy it's easy to fall asleep on the bus. We are soon home and clutching our belongings we say our goodbyes and thanks for a lovely day.....

FAY DRAPER...



List of Birds seen by LENS members :

House Sparrow	}	In small wooded area to north of Reserve car park and shop
Chaffinch		
Greenfinch		
Blackbird		
Song Thrush		
Dunnock		
Robin		
Blue Tit		
Collared Dove		
Woodpigeon		
Kestrel		
Magpie		
Starling		

Brent Goose	}	Seen by a small detachment of LENS members who (to get warm) walked along the road south of the Reserve Centre.
Field fare		
Oystercatcher		
Pheasant		

ON THE RESERVE ITSELF:

Black-headed Gull (very Few)
 Lesser Black-backed Gull (only one)
 Lapwing 100's
 Redshank one only.
 Grey Plover one only.
 Golden Plover one small flock, associating with Lapwing.
 Ringed Plover - Rather distant!
 Dunlin
 Some of the Shipley Birdwatchers Group (the other coach) identified Ruff

Moorhen	A few.	
Coot	Lots.	
Cormorant	about six.	
Pied Wagtail	two.	
Sparrowhawk	one.	
Greylag Goose	three.	
Mute Swan	}	Enjoying their food especially at 12.00 noon and 3.30pm
Bewicks Swan		
Whooper Swan		
Mallard		
Pintail		
Wigeon		
Gadwell	one only	
Tufted Duck		
Shoveler		
Teal		
Shelduck	A few.	
Pintail	A few.	

TOTAL 44 species (plus RUFF seen by SHIPLEY Group)

JOHN LANFORD.