

# LONG EATON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY BULLETIN

No. 51

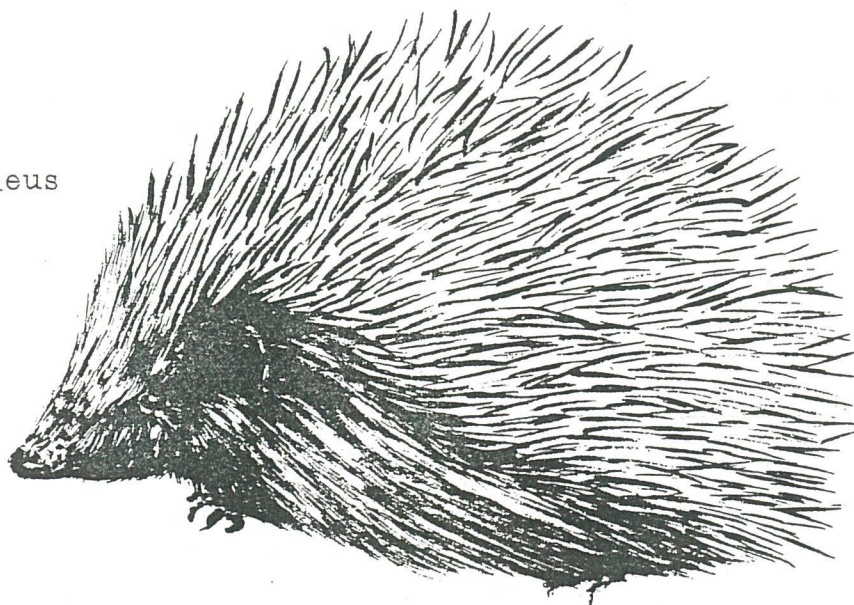
WINTER 2005



CHAIRMAN  
VICE-CHAIRMAN  
SECRETARY  
MEETINGS SECRETARY  
TREASURER  
HON. AUDITOR

Alan Heath 9733766  
John Blackburn 9732710  
Marion Bryce 8497941  
J & F Blackburn  
Helen Knewstubb  
Bob Wasley

HEDGEHOG  
*Erinaceus europaeus*



## CHAIRMAN'S FORWARD

Another successful year and we are pleased to have secured the current meeting venue, at least for the foreseeable future. This has however resulted in an increase in the hire fee, the previous being £12 per meeting and now £20. Sadly the increase has had to be met by an increase in the basic subscription. Increases of cost continue all round including Public Liability Insurance and Speakers Fees.

Some of our members joined with Friends of Forbes Hole and Groundwork Erewash Valley and members of the public in January to construct bird nesting boxes. A total of 24 were made, 15 being placed at Forbes Hole and the rest at Pioneer Meadows. It is known that around 7 of those at Forbes Hole have been used. Also in January, we put on a display for the Environmental Fun Day at Long Eaton Upper School, now a Science College which was well attended.

I had the pleasure of attending on your behalf, the Grand Opening of the Attenborough Nature Centre in March where I had the pleasure of meeting Sir David Attenborough (There are some benefits to being a chairman!). The centre have kindly agreed to display our events programme. The society also put on a display of pond life and bat recordings at the centre for Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trusts wildlife week in June. We were also represented at the exhibition of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Entomological Society on the 5th November.

Following a talk about Derbyshire's Biodiversity Programme by Debbie Court, it is hoped that as many of you as possible will forward your recordings. On page 7 are details of some species of special interest and I have included in this bulletin various bird sightings, including the RSPB Garden Bird Watch in January. The comprehensive report from Helen Longland is particularly appreciated and a fine example of what a society like ours can do.

Finally, our congratulations are extended to our founder member, Norman Lewis who received an MBE in the New Years Honours List in recognition of his extensive work for wildlife and for conservation.

Alan W. Heath

ERRATUM : The last Bulletin, No.50 should have been listed as 'Spring 2005', not Winter as given.

WEB SITE : [www.geocities.com/lensnatural](http://www.geocities.com/lensnatural) history



R.S.P.B. GARDEN BIRDWATCH - January 2005

Blackbird	3	2	2	1	4
Blue Tit	3	2	2	1	7
Bullfinch					4
Chaffinch	1	9	2	1	4
Coal Tit			1		
Collared Dove	1	2	2		3
Dunnock	1	1	3		2
Goldfinch	1				2
Great Tit	1	1	2	1	6
Greenfinch	12	6	2		5
Grey Wagtail		1			
House Sparrow	8	3	1	11	
Long-tailed Tit		1			7
Magpie			1	2	4
Pied Wagtail		1			
Reed Bunting					5
Robin	1	1		1	1
Starling	14	12	1		6
Willow Tit					1
Woodpigeon		2		5	3
Wren		1			1
	Gwen Bates 11.45/12.45 Hardy Close L.E.	John & Fay Blackburn Quorndon Cresc. L.E.	Firfield School, Breaston - 31/1/05 12.15/13.15	Alan Heath 11.00/12.00 Harlaxton Drive, L.E.	Helen Longland Lakeside Avenue, L.E.

NOTE : Firfield School recorded on the 31st January as the official date was at a weekend. This difference is permissible.

It is interesting to note the differences in numbers of some species over a short distance.

Since joining the British Trust for Ornithology and its Garden BirdWatch project in 1995 I have kept a weekly record of the birds visiting our garden.

The numbers of some species have hardly altered, whilst others show a marked difference. The comparison table below shows the averages for each of the first three months in 1995 and 2005.

	January		February		March	
	1995	2005	1995	2005	1995	2005
blue tit	2	3	2	2	2	2
robin	1	2	1	2	2	1
blackbird	3	3	3	4	3	4
house sparrow	16	6	16	8	16	8
starling	30	20	20	12	25	8
dunnock	1	1	1	2	1	2
chaffinch	2	5	2	5	2	6
great tit	1	1	1	2	1	2
greenfinch	3	10	2	10	3	8
collared dove	1	6	2	4	2	4
bullfinch		1		2		2
coal tit	1	1		2		
crow	1	2	1		1	2
gold finch		4		5		5
longtailed tit	4	4		2		2
magpie	1	2		1	2	1
mistle thrush				1		1
song thrush	1	1	1		1	1
wood pigeon		1		1		1
wren		1		1		1
Gwen Bates	4, Hardy	Close,	Long Eaton			

BIRD SIGHTINGS - 2005

Dec 2004/Jan 2005	Corn Bunting Yellow Hammer	Trent Meadows	B. Warhurst
1 January	Gt. Spotted Woodpecker	Harlaxton Dr. L.E.	A. Heath
10 January	4 Long-tail Tits	Harlaxton Dr. L.E.	A. Heath
March	Chiffchaff Red-breasted Goose	Attenborough Nature Res.	B. Warhurst
18 March	2 Egyptian Geese	Attenborough Nature Res.	A. Heath
20 March	Green Woodpecker	Toton Meadows	A. Maggs
March	50+ Waxwings	Long Eaton Park	

FIRFIELD SCHOOL - 2 January to 27 March - Breaston

Blackbird	From L. Jones and communicated
Blue Tit	by June Crosby
Chaffinch	
Collared Dove	
Dunnock	
Goldfinch	FOOD AVAILABLE -
Great Tit	Peanuts
Greenfinch	Fats
House Sparrow	Seed mixed with cereal
Long-tail Tit	Water
Mistle Thrush	Nyger
Robin	
Song Thrush	
Starling	
Woodpigeon	
Wren	

BIRD REPORT -

communicated by Helen Longland

All sightings are from Pasture Lane,  
Long Eaton Gravel Pits and Trent Meadows  
unless stated

JANUARY 2005

Jan 2nd. Long Eaton Gravel Pits. The male  
American Ring-necked Duck was still  
on the pylon pit and into its 10th week at the  
site. Also at least 3 Corn Buntings were in  
among a mixed flock of Tree Sparrows and  
Yellowhammers in the ferry field

Jan 5th. Two Waxwings were feeding in Rowans  
opposite Wilsthorpe School

Jan 6th Stonechat seen in field opposite farm  
on Pasture Lane with two more on  
Trent Meadows.

Jan 15th Widgeon numbers have risen to 300+  
and three Golden Plovers were with  
the Lapwing flock.

The Short-eared Owls continue to be seen most  
days along the lane and in the ferry field,  
with 3 being the most counted.

Jan 19th Little Egret dropped in on the Pylon  
Pit

Jan 24th Out of Long Eaton but of great interest  
was a Dartford Warbler found at the  
Sanctuary next to Pride Park Stadium, the  
first Derbyshire record since 1840

Jan 25th The Ring-necked Duck disappeared and  
three days later a newly arrived drake  
Ring-necked Duck turned up at Bredon's Hardwick  
Worcs., 80 miles SW of Long Eaton. Was it the  
same one ?

FEBRUARY 2005

Feb 2nd. 14 Gadwall, 6 Shovelers, 6 Teal.  
Heron near river with sticks in  
mouth obviously nest building.

Feb 5th. Shelduck on the Pylon Pit and 4 Snipe  
on the Conservation Pit. Two  
Egyptian Geese continue to be seen

Feb 18th. 2 Kestrels displaying over the farm  
and 6 Golden Eye on the river.

Feb 26th 27 Waxwings feeding on the bushes  
near Eaton Farm Pub

MARCH 2005

Mar 7th Noticeable bird song along Pasture  
Lane, mainly Chaffinch, Great Tit  
and Reed Bunting.

Mar 8th Grey Partridge by the river. Also  
Skylarks singing and 2 Green  
Woodpeckers seen



MARCH continued

- Mar 9th Two Whooper Swans reported at dusk dropping in on the wind surfing pit.
- Mar 10th Buzzard soaring over the Trent, and the presence of a Peregrine Falcon at the entrance of the nest box, situated on the third cooling tower from the left looking from Pasture Lane.
- Mar 12th Peregrine Flacon seen again and also Tree Creeper and 2 Oystercatchers.
- Mar 15th 14 Golden Eye all together on the river. 2 Goosanders and a Stonechat (male) along Pasture Lane.
- Mar 18th Much warmer and a Brimstone and a Small Tortoishell butterfly seen. Grey Wagtail with 2 Pied Wagtails seen on the Conservation Pit, also a Redshank. The Peregrine was again seen displaying over the cooling towers and near the wind surfing pit were 3 Stonechats and a Green Woodpecker.
- Mar 21st Peacock butterfly near the farm and 3 Buzzards soaring over Conservation Pit. 30 Fieldfares in the ploughed field.

We extend our grateful thanks for this comprehensive report which illustrates just can be seen when you are out and about.

LIST OF THE BIRDS SEEN -

American Ring-neck Dove	Little Egret
Buzzard	Oyster Catcher
Chaffinch	Peregrine Falcon
Corn Bunting	Pied Wagtail
Dartford Warbler *	Redshank
Fieldfare	Reed Bunting
Gadwell	Shelduck
Golden Eye	Short-eared Owl
Great Tit	Shoveller
Golden Plover	Snipe
Green Woodpecker	Stonechat
Grey Partridge	Teal
Grey Wagtail	Tree Sparrow
Heron	Waxwing
Kestrel	Whooper Swan
Lapwing	Widgeon

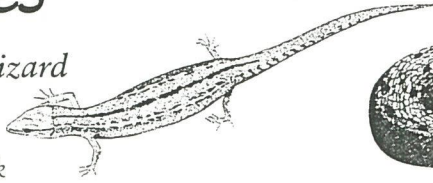
\* Sanctuary next to Pride Park Stadium

BUTTERFLIES SEEN -

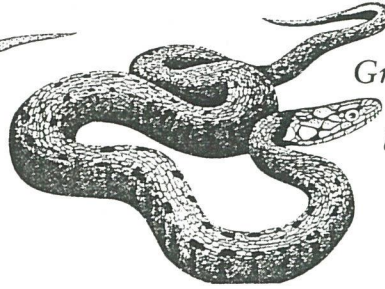
Brimstone  
Peacock  
Small Tortoishell

## Reptiles

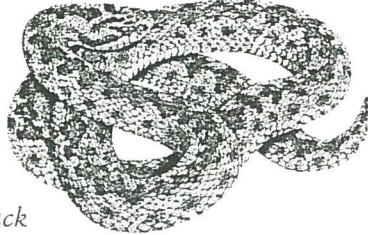
**Common Lizard**  
Scaly with a  
black stripe  
along the back



**Grass Snake**  
Distinctive  
black/yellow  
collar just  
behind  
the head



**Adder**  
Has zig-zag  
patterns on back

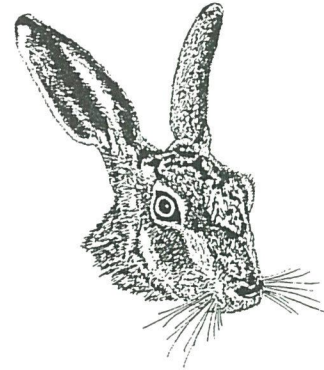
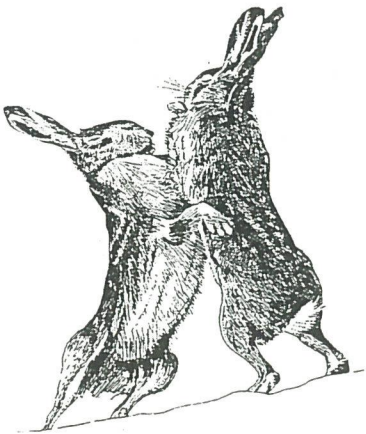


**Slow worm**  
a legless lizard



## Brown Hare

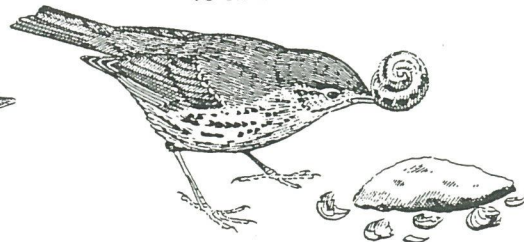
Hares are larger  
than rabbits and  
have black ear tips



Hares box in spring as part of a mad courtship ritual. If you see hares boxing, it's most likely to be a male and female pair.

## Song Thrush

Song Thrush using an 'anvil'  
to smash snail shells



The Song Thrush is slightly smaller than the Mistle Thrush and is warmer brown, rather than grey brown. The Song Thrush's tail feathers are all brown whereas the Mistle Thrush's has bold white edges.



## SUMMER OUTINGS -

The first meeting of the summer programme was a visit to Cottagers Hill at Gotham where various wild flowers were seen. John Travis explained about changes in the course of the River Trent and also its geology.

At the beginning of May there was a visit to Breedon-on-the-Hill church and the following plants were seen along side the road leading to the church.

Common Vetch, Red Valerian, Cleavers, Mustard Garlic, Sowthistle, Cowslip, Bluebell, Red Campion, White Campion, Arum Lily, Knapweed, Wood Avens, Alexanders, Honesty, Hedge Woundwort, Stinging Nettle and White Dead Nettle.

Members were also given a guided tour of the church.

Later in the month, a visit to Locko Park resulted in the recording of the following birds -

Great Spotted Woodpecker, Green Woodpecker, Swallow, Goldfinch, Heron, Canada Geese, Tree Creeper, Buzzard, Spotted Flycatcher, Greenfinch, Kestrel, Pied Wagtail and Rook.

A visit to Netherfield Lagoons in early June featured a fine display of Bee Orchids as well as Blue Fleabane and Deadly Nightshade.

Birds recorded included -

Chiffchaff, House Martin, Little Grebe, Pochard, Ruddy Duck, Sand Martin, Skylark (H), Swan, Swift and Whitethroat.

A visit to the Manifold Valley was very successful on a fine, warm and sunny afternoon. Some time was spent watching a pair of Peregrine Falcons feeding their young. The visit was led by Dr. David Gibbons who explained the history and geology of the region as well as details of the flora.

Flora seen included -

Wood Avens, Water Avens (including hybrids), Sweet Cicely, Valerian, Fox-tail and Oat Grass were also seen.

Of further interest was a Cardinal Beetle, a Dung Beetle and also a Brimstone butterfly.

In July a visit was made to Forbes Hole Local Nature Reserve and led by Alan Heath. Pond Life was examined and flora included -

Dogwood, Marsh Speedwell, both of which are new to the botanical list for the site. Also saw Scabious and Dovesfoot Cranesbill. A 6-spot Burnett was seen on Tufted Vetch.

The final visit was to Golden Brook Nature Reserve at Breaston and led by Marion Bryce.

Off Wilsthorpe Road enroute to the reserve we saw Duke of Argyle Tea Plant. At the reserve we saw River Speedwell, Allseed, Fat Hen, Red Pimpernel, Purple Loosestrife, Few birds were seen but listed in the book at the hide as recently seen were Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler and Water Rail.

Thanks are extended to the leaders of the various visits including Marion Bryce, Fay & John Blackburn, Roger Wood, John Travis and Dr. David Gibbons.

## Dragons & Damsels In Nottinghamshire

A review of the status of Odonata in the county of Nottinghamshire. January 2005 by John Ellis, Records & Information Officer, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust & Sheila Wright, Nottinghamshire County Dragonfly Recorder.

### **Banded Demoiselle** *Calopteryx splendens*

Common and found all along the river Trent and its tributaries. Wanders considerable distances, and is often seen in areas remote from any suitable breeding habitat.

### **Beautiful Demoiselle** *Calopteryx virgo* **Conservation Status in Notts: Grade 2**

Very rare in the county, and apparently restricted to one site in central Nottinghamshire.

### **Emerald Damselfly** *Lestes sponsa*

Common in the north of the county and found in many of the Carrland pools and dykes. Also found at Attenborough Nature Reserve, pools in the Barnstone area, Colwick Country Park, Dukes Wood pond, along the Grantham Canal at Holme Pierrepont, amongst other places.

### **Large Red Damselfly** *Pyrrhosoma nymphula*

A fairly local species, with the main population found in the Carrlands in the north of the county but also found in a number of other places, including Clumber Park, the racecourse pool at Colwick, Newstead Abbey Park, and along the Grantham Canal.

### **Blue-tailed Damselfly** *Ischnura elegans*

Generally abundant throughout the county - our most common Odonata species.

### **Azure Damselfly** *Coenagrion puella*

Widespread and generally common, although usually less so than the superficially similar Common Blue damselfly.

### **Variable Damselfly** *Coenagrion pulchellum* **Conservation Status in Notts: Grade 1**

Apparently very scarce, but probably overlooked. Try the Grantham Canal especially on the Plungar stretch or on the borrow pits adjacent to the River Idle at Misson, as this species has occasionally been recorded at both of these sites.

### **Common Blue Damselfly** *Enallagma cyathigerum*

Very common and widespread throughout Nottinghamshire.

### **Red-eyed Damselfly** *Erythromma najas*

Rather local in the county, though probably under-recorded, as it has a tendency to sit on pads of waterlilies some distance from the shore. Try Attenborough Nature Reserve, Colwick Park Nature Reserve Lake, the Grantham Canal, or the Nottingham canal in the Cossall area.

### **Small Red-eyed Damselfly** *Erythromma viridulum*

Not yet recorded in the county but moving north and should be looked for. A colonist from continental Europe, a small population of this damselfly was first noticed in Essex in 1999, and it is now becoming well-established in Britain as a breeding species.



**Hairy Dragonfly *Brachytron pratense* Conservation Status in Notts: Grade 1**

Only found at one site in the extreme north of the county but it is possible that there may be other, as yet unfound colonies around the Idle valley. In the 1930's, it was recorded at Wollaton Park lake, but has long since disappeared from this site.

**Southern Hawker *Aeshna cyanea***

A very common species in the county, we have even had them breeding in the pond at the Ragged School in Sneinton!

**Brown Hawker *Aeshna grandis***

Very common and widespread, and often seen around ponds in urban areas, including those in gardens.

**Common Hawker *Aeshna juncea***

Despite its name, not at all common in Nottinghamshire - although there are recent signs that it may be increasing its range here. Probably best looked for around pond and lakes in the Sherwood Forest area, Colwick Country Park, ponds at the Wildflower Farm at Langar, the Bennerley Marsh area in the Erewash Valley, and in the Carrlands of the north.

**Migrant Hawker *Aeshna mixta***

Widespread in the south of the county, and also in the Carrlands of north Nottinghamshire. Has become more common in recent years, and whilst once known largely as a migrant (hence its vernacular name), now breeds here in good numbers.

**Emperor Dragonfly *Anax imperator***

Now common in the south - for example at Attenborough Nature Reserve, Colwick Country Park, Wollaton Park lake, and Rushcliffe Country Park. Rapidly spreading in the north and can be seen at the Idle Borrow Pits and elsewhere in the Carrlands. It was unknown in Notts until the late 1980's, and its colonisation of the county in recent years may be a sign of climate change.

**Lesser Emperor Dragonfly *Anax parthenope***

A vagrant from southern Europe, where it is widespread. Three Notts records, from Holme Pierrepont in 1998, Colwick Country Park in 2000 and Netherfield in 2002.

**Golden-ringed Dragonfly *Cordulegaster boltonii* Conservation Status in Notts: Grade 2**

Very rare. A small but probably long-established colony at one site in the Trent valley.

**Black-tailed Skimmer *Orthetrum cancellatum***

Becoming more common and can be found on most of the south Notts gravel pits. This dragonfly is another species that is likely to have become established in the county because of climate change.

**Broad-bodied Chaser *Libellula depressa***

Widely distributed in the county, but not particularly common. The pools at Naturescape Wildflower Farm at Langar are a good place to spot both this and the following species.



**Four-spotted Chaser** *Libellula quadrimaculata*

Local, but by no means rare.

**Black Darter** *Sympetrum danae* **Conservation Status in Notts: Grade 2**

Local, and largely restricted to the Carrlands, with a few records for the Sherwood Forest area. Try Misson Carr Nature Reserve or Idle borrow pits.

**Common Darter** *Sympetrum striolatum*

Very common throughout the county.

**Ruddy Darter** *Sympetrum sanguineum*

Local, but has increased its range and become much more common in recent years, following its first discovery in the county at Sellers Wood LNR in 1986. Large numbers can often be seen in late summer at Attenborough Nature Reserve.

**Yellow-winged Darter** *Sympetrum flaveolum*

Vagrant. A handful of records, including a sighting at Lound Gravel pits.

**Red-veined Darter** *Sympetrum fonscolombii*

Very rare. Just two county records, the most recent being at Attenborough Nature Reserve in 2004.

## **Barker's Pond/Our Garden ( 8-11-04 to 6-11-05)**

**Fay & John Blackburn**

The grey wagtail continued its customary winter visits to the garden with daily sightings up until 19th March 2005. On 20th November it was observed by the garden pool in close proximity to a pied wagtail.

Only one goosander visited Barker's Pond this year when a solitary male was present for a few hours on 23rd December 2004.

Fewer tufted duck made their winter pilgrimage to the pond this year. Small flocks were present on a daily basis but usually consisting of no more than five or six birds. The highest totals observed were seven males and four females (4/1/05), nine males and three females (13/1/05) and ten males and three females (21/1/05). This year's first winter arrival was a solitary female on 17th October.

Kingfishers have been more numerous during the period from November 2004 with sixteen sightings recorded over the pond up to 29th November 2005 in addition to the bird's distinctive call being heard over the water on other occasions. Individual birds also visited the garden on 4th March and 8th, 19th and 27th October 2005.

A cormorant was a notable first time visitor to the pond on 30th December 2004 and a Canada goose touched down briefly on 4th September 2005.

An even more remarkable first time visitor on 11th April 2005 was a female red crested pochard that arrived on the pond mid-morning affording us ample time to both photograph and record its visit on the camcorder. To our astonishment it later found its way into the garden and spent a short time swimming on the pool before returning to the pond. It finally disappeared early in the afternoon and we should be most interested to learn of any subsequent sightings of it in the area.

Swans made a welcome reappearance on the pond late in September with the arrival of a female and five cygnets, an event unlikely to be greeted with enthusiasm by the local fishermen. In mid-October a further swan, believed to be a young male, appeared on the scene but it was quickly left in no doubt that its presence was not welcome. After some minor skirmishes the two parties are currently keeping their distance in an uneasy truce.

There has been an unprecedented record sighting of goldfinches in the garden this year, often on a daily basis, and at times their visits have surpassed those of the sparrows, whose numbers have declined dramatically. The goldfinches have usually arrived in pairs but five were present on 21st June and four were observed on 3rd November 2005.

During November and December 2004 long-tailed tits continued to appear in large numbers with small flocks of 10-12 birds at a time seen flitting through the trees in the garden but they quickly dispersed at the start of the current year with only the occasional pair observed during early Spring. Their Autumn return was marked by the arrival in the garden of ten birds on 4th October 2005.

The greater spotted woodpecker visited the garden on at least sixteen occasions between 27th November 2004 and 2nd August 2005.

It has been a disappointing winter for migrants. A solitary fieldfare arrived on 2nd January and was observed on six further occasions up to and including 27th February. There was only one sighting of a redwing, also on 2nd January.



Greenfinches were much in evidence during last winter. Ten were present on the various feeders on 24th December together with an unusually large gathering of more than 30 starlings and this year twelve finches were feeding simultaneously on 21st February 2005.

A mistle thrush appeared on five occasions between 11th January and 19th March and later in the year on 8th, 9th and 10th July. A young song thrush was also seen on two days in February and again on several days in September. Normally a timid bird, this one proved to be a real aggressor, standing its ground in the food quests and repeatedly putting young blackbirds to flight, sometimes two or three at a time! Hopefully it has survived these encounters.

A goldcrest was a rare visitor to the garden on 18th and 22nd November 2004.

A male bullfinch was present on 2nd May and 10th June and a pair were spotted on 4th June ground feeding on wild bird seed scattered on one of the paths.

A pair of reed buntings were noted on 21st, 22nd and 25th February.

The most recent highlight of the year was the first time appearance on the pond of a male gadwall on 6th November in the company of a pair of mallards.

\* \* \* \* \*

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 7th November 2005

Officers and Committee were re-elected en bloc and members unanimously approved an increase in the basic subscription to offset increasing running costs.

The members meeting which followed included Fay Blackburn's presentation of an autumn theme from the National Arboretum. Alan Heath showed some slides of close up of caterpillars and other insects. Max Bryce then gave a detailed account of bryophytes including specimens which were passed around. The final speaker was David Pinney who gave Part 2 of his visits to Kenya, illustrating his talk with many fine photographs of animals.

A copy of the society's Balance Sheet is included with this bulletin.



LONG EATON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2005

	2005	2004
<b>Income</b>		
Meeting Fees (Winter)	309.00	270.00
Meeting Fees (Summer)	99.00	-
Annual Subscriptions	185.00	180.00
Coffee & Sundry Sales	39.74	26.90
Raffle	26.00	21.50
National Lottery Funding	-	153.62
Donations	50.00	-
Bank Interest	<u>4.68</u>	<u>1.28</u>
	<b><u>713.42</u></b>	<b><u>653.30</u></b>
 <b>Expenditure</b>		
Payments to Speakers	273.00	238.00
Stationery and Photocopying & Books	35.37	63.65
Insurance	173.25	164.06
Room Rent	144.00	132.00
Affiliation Fees	57.00	57.00
Floral Gift	-	22.44
Coffee Supplies	<u>4.50</u>	<u>6.99</u>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b><u>687.12</u></b>	<b><u>684.14</u></b>
Excess of Income over Expenditure	<u>26.30</u>	<u>(30.84)</u>
	<b><u>£713.42</u></b>	<b><u>£653.30</u></b>

LONG EATON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 JULY 2005

	2005	2004
<b>Accumulated Fund</b>		
As at 1 August 2004	1,299.89	1,330.73
Add Excess of Income over Expenditure	<u>26.30</u>	<u>(30.84)</u>
	<b><u>£1,326.19</u></b>	<b><u>£1,299.89</u></b>

**Represented By:**

<b>Royal Bank of Scotland</b>		
Branch Current Account	680.98	597.24
Deposit Account	639.71	635.03
Cash in Hand	5.50	67.62
	<b><u>£1,326.19</u></b>	<b><u>£1,299.89</u></b>



Helen Knewstubb  
Treasurer



R Wasley  
Honorary Auditor