

Autumn 2019

Volume 2 Issue 24

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Sandiacre in the News!



A BBC cameraman films Quentin Raynor and Helen Thompson July 2019

Photo credit Marion Bryce

East Midlands Today's Quentin Raynor interviewed Helen Thompson of Save Sandiacre's Beauty Spots and LENS Marion Bryce, highlighting the potential environmental destruction of a proposed new HS2 service road which would spoil the timeless view of Stoney Clouds over the Erewash Canal and the wonderful wildflower meadows of Cloudside.

LENS at Rotaract Club Fun Day



Long Eaton Rotary Club Chairman and family name LENS Native Mammals at Rotaract Club Fun Day 21 August 2019

The Rotaract Club of Long Eaton organised a Family Fun Day at West Park on 21 August 2019. Marion Bryce and Penny Newton ran a LENS stall in support. Activities provided were :Do you know your mammals? Do you know your insects, Drag-onfly Making and Snake identification. What a busy day!

Other stalls included Erewash Tree Wardens, Erewash Dog Wardens and Recycling and a Huge Climbing Wall.

The weather was kind and many families participated. All of the activities were free of charge and everyone was given a raffle ticket to try and win a Eurocamp Holiday. A great day out!

Erewash Borough Council have proposed a new Local Nature Reserve at Orchid Wood Breaston DE72 3QF
Have your say!

LENS at Erewash Museum

Dalby House in Ilkeston was designated as Erewash Museum in the 1980s. The building is a Georgian family home with Victorian extensions.

The museum is noted for its family friendly focus particularly popular is 'The Beach' set up in the garden in summer.

Exhibition galleries feature the history of the Erewash area with exhibits covering the Second World War, archaeology and Stanton Ironworks.

Kate Crossley, Museum Curator, organises exhibitions and a lively programme events. The focus of Wild Erewash and Erewash Museum Mini-beast Week is to introduce children to the concerns of wildlife.

Stuart Gilder and Marion Bryce were pleased to take the LENS stall to the Museum Minibeast Week, with the LENS general insect quiz and dragonfly making a very popular free activity on a very hot summer day.



Swallow Window at Dalby House

30 May 2019

Photo credit Marion Bryce

LENS at Pioneer Meadows Eco-event

Pioneer Meadows is a 7 Ha Local Nature Reserve providing an important area of green space on the edge of Kirk Hallam. Habitats include grassland, woodland hedgerow, the Sow Brook and Pioneer Pond with good paths around.

At this year's School Eco-event, Stuart Gilder, Joan Breakwell and Marion Bryce led a Pond Dipping Team which the children enjoyed hugely. Aquatic invertebrates discovered this year included a water scorpion and several large water stick-insects.

Other invertebrates were water shrimps, pond slaters and several types of water snail.

It is difficult to believe that beautiful dragonflies and damselflies emerge from the 'ugly' aquatic nymphs which were found in the pond.

Each child was able to make their own dragonfly from pipe cleaners.

We were glad to meet Debbie, the new Ranger for Ilkeston's Victoria Park and she showed us how to make willow decorations.

The Eco-event was organised by Jaimey Richards and sponsored by Erewash Borough Council.



LENS at Pioneer Meadows Eco-event

1 June 2019

Photo credit Marion Bryce

LENS at DaNES Summer Exhibition

Despite poor weather, the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Entomological Society Summer Exhibition went ahead. Derek Brumbill and Marion Bryce put on a general insect identification quiz. Dragonfly making and identification was also available.

Other exhibitions were exotic stick insects. These are part of efforts to keep biodiverse genetic information in stick insect breeding programmes as the native insect fauna of many countries is now in isolated island groups.

Darren Ward put on an excellent display of butterflies, including

dingy skippers and marbled whites. The value of ragwort for insects was highlighted in a highly entertaining escape programme for cinnabar moth caterpillars.

Dave Budworth and Pete Patrick showed some moths they had trapped for release. And there was also the opportunity to have a close look at aquatic invertebrates under the supervision of Julie Marshall and Felicity Jackson.

This was the first year that the weather was so bad that we were unable to carry out the annual insect hunt on the meadow at Shipley Park Visitor Centre.



Danes Summer Exhibition 30 June 2019

Photo credit Julie Marshall

Beeston Canal and Heritage Centre

April 29 Monday Beeston Canal and Heritage Centre

Meet 7pm – Roadside parking, Beeston Lock end of Canal side, Beeston Rylands, NG9 1LZ. Good paths, refreshments. Leader Brian Helliwell



Today was the first day of Summer, that is the LENS Summer. A group of us met at Beeston Lock on a bright evening, for a short circular walk down Beeston Canal Cut, across the field to the River Trent and back past the Weir to the Canal and River Trust Heritage Centre. We stopped at various points to be regaled with tales of local history.

We started by walking along part of the longest floodbund in Europe by the Beeston Canal. The canal was cut in 1796 to carry coal to the steam powered mills which powered the Industrial Revolution, heralding 40 years of Canal Mania. Here was the site of the old 'Jolly Anglers' where the landlord was famous for rescuing more than 20 people from the canal - Customers? Bendigo, born 1811 was a famous local resident. He was a bare-knuckle fighter who became a Methodist Lay Preacher. He had his own way of delivering a sermon. Adopting a boxer's stance he would point to the hard-earned trophies by his side and address his audience with the following words: "See them belts, see them cups, I used to fight for those. But now I fight for Christ."

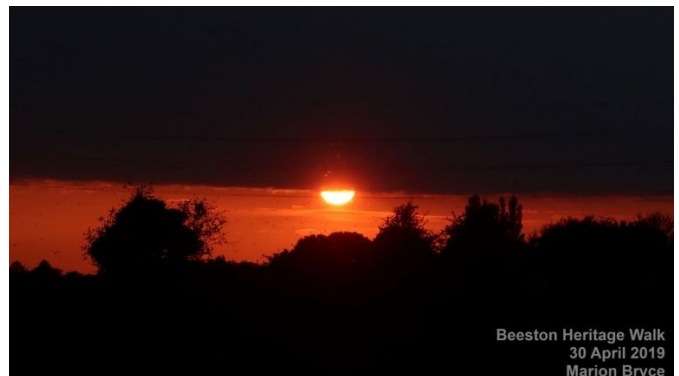
Beeston means the town in the pasture, although the name has been reinvented as Bee's Town with a statue of a bee keeper in the town and bees were included on the town's coat of arms in 1959. The Beeston Lido, a public outdoor swimming pool in the canal cut, was opened in 1924 then officially closed in 1947 due to health and safety concerns. The habit of diving off the bridge while boats passed beneath was one of the reasons. The sign can still be seen in the bridge coping stones

A right Royal Scandal was relived as we looked across a ploughed field to the white farmhouse occupied by Freda West, for 17 years the mistress of Edward VIII.

The River Trent was brown and fast flowing, the only river which flows from West to East, which never reaches the sea. As we walked beside the river, we peeked down the bank to see the white stars of wild garlic, purple comfrey, willow and osier while the competing laughter of green woodpeckers echoed along the valley. Perched on top of the sandstone cliff across the river is Clifton Hall, for many years inhabited by ghosts but now converted to residential apartments.

The setting sun glowed and lit up an orange sky as we were mesmerised by the rushing ripples at Beeston Weir with its hydro-electric generator and fenced off fish ladder at Owen's

Place where a young man tragically was drowned when trying to rescue a friend. On the natural history front we saw Sand Martins, a Sparrowhawk, Magpie, Wood Pigeon. Then on the field two black Crows and a whooping Green Plover. On the river was a sleeping Mute Swan, a Grey Heron and low flying Black-headed Gulls. The only Kingfisher we saw was back in the Heritage Centre Shop where we sat down to a welcome cup of tea. May 20 Monday Morley Brickyards



Morley Brickyards

May 20 Monday Morley Brickyards

Meet 7pm Brick Kiln Lane, Morley DE7 6DF. Leader Stuart Gilder

Lying some 4 miles north-east of Derby, Morley is a small scattered village in the green uplands which divide the industrial tracts of the Middle Trent Valley from those of the coalfields to the north. Morley village is on a plateau where red marls, sandstone and pebble beds meet with the Coal Measures to produce a spring line, which was probably the dominant factor in the siting of the village. The appearance of the Parish outlying areas has been modified by opencast workings since in the past, an outcropping seam of high quality coal has been mined, but grown over and restored, it is now open park-like country.

The geology of the area is complex, gritstone at Drum Hill meets with shale and pebble beds indented by several small brooks with gently sloping valleys and rounded hills, due to a partial covering of Boulder Clay. It was the finer grit of this group which was used to make the scythe and grindstones produced by Morley Quarry. In the Moor Road area. An interesting feature is the deposit of boulder clay which lies at the junction with Brick Kiln Lane in the vicinity of the old Brickyard. In pre-Roman England there were a number of track ways criss-crossing the country and one of these, the Portway, leads past Morley-Church. One of Morley's Church Wardens,

Morley Brickyards

and distinguished botanist, started a school in Morley for boys. There is a lectern to his memory in the church dated 2nd March 1894, so we were in distinguished company for our wildlife survey at the old Morley Brickyards.



LENS at Morley Brickyards 20 May 2019

Photo credit Marion Bryce

We met under a lowering sky, then a rainbow appeared and the sun started to shine as we idly watched the silage harvest. The bright blue flowers of perennial cornflower with bistort and ground elder in the grassy verge attracted attention. After our geological brief from Stuart we ignored a footpath sign with holly either side of a stile and nimbly hopped over an adjacent stile into the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust Site of Special Scientific Interest at Morley Brickyards. We were intrigued as to the reason for the SSSI status, which Stuart thought might be due to the presence of Great Crested Newts in the pools, we soon realised we had entered a parallel universe of murky pools. Stuart led us past sycamore and ash woodland with brave bluebells and bright eyed wood forget-me-not thrusting through intrusive bramble. Towards a maze of narrow paths on raised banks punctuated with what looked like tree ferns.



Narrow Buckler Fern Moore

Photo credit Marion Bryce

But this was Narrow Buckler Fern *Dryopteris carthusiana*

This is an occasional native perennial of wet woods and occurs scattered throughout Derbyshire. The fronds are lanceolate not triangular and are more spaced out and are twice pinnate. We had not knowingly seen this fern before.

Broad Buckler Fern *Dryopteris dilatata* which was also present, is a common native –evergreen semi-perennial of woods, often on acidic soils. It grows to 90 cm tall to 120 cm wide. and has dark green tripinnate fronds, the frond rib is covered in brown scales with dark centres. The Latin specific epithet dilatata means “spread out”. The broad triangular leaves grow from dense crowns which arch outwards, like a shuttlecock.

Our path came to a series of full stops giving us pause for a view of the murky pools occasionally punctuated by soft rush and reedmace. The sun blasted through the grey willow which was bursting with cotton wool parachutes which covered the path and the ponds with a fluffy downy film.



Open Pool with Willow at Morley Brickyards

20 May 2019

Photo credit Marion Bryce

Then we saw a wonderful sight—flowers of Water Violet which most of those present had never seen before.



Water Violet at Morley Brickyards 20 May 2019

Photo credit Marion Bryce

Morley Brickyards

Water violet, *Hottonia palustris* is very rare native perennial of standing and slow flowing water. It is an aquatic perennial with submerged whorled, feathery leaves. Despite its name it is not actually a violet but one of the primrose family. A pretty native oxygenator which likes calm shallow water it produces spikes of delicate lilac flowers with buttercup yellow centres which protrude out of the water in late spring. The beautiful Water Violet is very susceptible to water pollution.

Further exploration of the squelchy sphagnum bog revealed large areas punctuated with the waxy round leaves of marsh pennywort *Hydrocotyle vulgaris*, an unusual plant locally and one which is declining due to drainage and development.

But it became apparent that all of the plants of water violet were confined to just one pond, and the bad news was that this was a pond badly contaminated with the invasive alien plant New Zealand Pigmy Weed *Crassula helmsii*, which is notoriously difficult to eradicate.

Perhaps there is hope for the beautiful water violet as not all of the pools on the site have been invaded and with a bit of help (and permission from Natural England), the water violet may be introduced to other – non-contaminated – pools on the site.

What a helter-skelter of an evening! At this point, although the sun was still shining, we decided to retire to the old Three Horseshoes Inn, to celebrate the union by marriage of two of our Wildlife Companions at LENS. Cheers!

Marion Bryce
20 May 2019

<https://www.morleyparishcouncil.org.uk/village-history.html>
The Flora of Derbyshire Alan Wilmot and Nick Moyes

Naturescape

LENS Wildlife Group with the British Naturalist's Association- visit to Naturescape Wildflower Farm, Langar,

Meet 12 noon, car park, Coach Gap Lane NG13 9HP

Leader Dr Robert Tansey

Hidden away in Langar is a Wildflower Nursery Garden called Naturescape. This was founded in 1978 by Brian and Elizabeth Scarborough in their back garden at Bottesford and has expanded over the years to become the largest producer of British native wildflower seeds in the United Kingdom.

The total area of seed production is 200 acres with 45 acres of this open to the public. Most of the seed business these days is conducted over the internet but Naturescape

Naturescape

welcome visitors to their wonderful wildlife garden and visitor centre where the Tea Room serves homemade cakes, drinks and ice-creams although we did not need the ice-creams on the day of our visit.

The weather forecast was atrocious and we passed through heavy rain on our journey to Langar, but a light mizzle was the worst we experienced throughout our tour. We were shown around the site by Jean Scarborough, niece of the owner with her Jack Russell Terrier, Bob, who knows the route well.



LENS with the BNA at Naturescape 2019

Photo credit Marion Bryce

One by one Jean introduced us to the flowers of the field. Hay rattle is an annual which can be found in meadows and grows in full sun, it has lemon yellow flowers followed by seeds which rattle in the wind in an oversized seed pod. Being a Hemi-parasite Hay Rattle requires a host from which it takes energy via attachment to the plant's root system, Hay rattle prefers slender leafed grasses and is sold as plugs with it's host grass. Jean told us that some customers carefully remove the grass from the purchased plug, and are most surprised when the Yellow Rattle dies.

Many of the flowers had bowed their heads after the insult of heavy rain but the colourful displays were bravely bearing up. Meadow mixes of Buttercup, Plantain, Hawkbit, Crested Dogstail and Quaking Grass. Blue Cornflower, pink Ragged Robin, Ladybird Poppies, Viper's Bugloss, Purple and mauve Cranesbills, Corn Chamomile and Ox-eye Daisy vied with to be named the favourite flower. It was clear that Jean loved them all.

Each field is individually named, Spinney, Skylark, Conery, Buttercup, March Hare and Partridge although some of the fields have now been unimaginatively re-Christened such as heavy field and John Deere. Most of the seeds are grown on site but, dependent upon the type of soil required, some plants have to be reared elsewhere.

Gardens in the Rain



Vipers Bugloss at Naturescape 2019

Photo credit Marion Bryce

Several seeds are hand picked, such as knapweed, but a lot of the meadow mixes are harvested with a giant vacuum cleaner and then dried in giant poly tunnels. Greenhouses with capillary irrigation are under construction. Within the cacophony of wildflowers many of the individual seed plants had been invaded by other species, which is why special sorting and sieving equipment is used before packaging pure varieties. It seemed sad that large quantities of the seeds are sold to Chemical companies such as Monsanto, to test the efficacy of their weedkillers.



Greenhouse with Poppies at Naturescape 2019

Photo credit Marion Bryce

In the cool and cloudy conditions of our visit we were surprised to see even one azure damselfly. Many grasshopper and cricket nymphs were jumping in the field margins. A Common Blue Butterfly was spotted in the wildflower meadows and skylarks were nesting. In the wildlife garden, Early Bees were busy working and there was a buzzing nest of Tree Bees under the roof of the Visitor Centre. In one of the sheds we saw a wasp nest under construction. How wonderful that the team at Naturescape welcomes all visitors! When asked how the birds are kept off the seed fields Jean explained, 'We are the mobile Scarecrows', for weedkillers they use 'The Polish Hoe'.

Back at the wildlife garden we were free to explore a sales area offering over 200 varieties of wildflower, grasses, pond & marginal plants including native lilies and native trees. The 2 wildlife ponds are known to support a variety of dragonflies, but one of the ponds has succumbed to the invasion of an alien plant, probably swampcress and will have to be filled in and redug.

After refreshment at the Cafe, Dr Robert Tansey, from the British Naturalist Society gave us an introduction to Small Mammal Trapping with the Bio-ecoss Tube Trap and the results of the Idle Valley Small Mammal Survey which is underway.



Dr Robert Tansy at Naturescape 2019

Photo credit Marion Bryce

On the way home we made brief stop at Long Clawson Creamery at Cropwell Bishop to sample their locally made Stilton. Delicious!

Marion Bryce 10 June 2019

Mapperley Wood

May 13 Monday Mapperley Wood Bluebell Walk
Meet 7pm Mapperley Reservoir Car Park (charge) DE7 6BR. Good paths. Leaders Joan Breakwell and Christine Carrier

It is a lovely view over the Reservoir driving to the meet point at Mapperley Wood, a Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (DWT) Nature Reserve in the Trent Valley Washlands Natural Character Area. Kate Lemon DWT Reserves Officer, asked if anyone would be interested in carrying out some surveying on DWT reserves to update species records which are used to influence planning issues and make management decisions, LENS members were invited to submit their records, even the casual sightings from trips out and about

Mapperley Wood

So we got out a plant recording card as Joan and Christine led us out of the sunshine, into the Woods where tall oak and ash trees with occasional sweet chestnut gave way to abundant elm with an understorey of hazel and hawthorn.



**Bluebell, Red Campion and Yellow Archangel
Mapperley Wood DWT Nature Reserve 2019**

Photo credit Marion Bryce

Derbyshire has only 6% remaining land cover of woodland. Secondary semi-natural woodlands, are now uncommon. Which elm is wych? Despite the English elm's name, wych elm is the only elm that is regarded as being truly native to Britain. English elm has a narrower leaf than wych elm, suckers freely and is more susceptible to Dutch Elm disease, both elm species were present in Mapperley Wood, with more of the English elm: Three of these had very small leaves pock marked by galls. Dog's mercury, bluebells, bugle, red campion, wood anemone and yellow archangel, signs of ancient woodland, made a colourful display.



**Bluebell, Red Campion and Yellow Archangel
Mapperley Wood DWT Nature Reserve 2019**

Photo credit Marion Bryce

A thrush called as a blackcap sang, it was an evening 'dawn' chorus! There were batboxes, bird boxes (including a tawny owl box) and also a solitary bee nesting station fixed on the trees. We stopped to watch a treecreeper work its way to the very top of a tall oak.

In the middle of the wood is a new bird hide which

overlooks a pond, which is overgrown with pond sedge and reedmace. Meadowsweet and water horsetail grow in the marsh.



Pond at Mapperley Wood DWT Nature Reserve 2019

Photo credit Marion Bryce

Joan and Christine filled several bird feeders with seed and suet and then we waited for the birds. Gradually they flew closer but as our group was a bit noisy the only birds which came onto the feeders, before we left, were robin, great tit and bluetit, we can be sure others are feasting now we have left.



**Bird Feeder with Bluetit and Great Tit
Mapperley Wood DWT Nature Reserve 2019**

Photo credit Marion Bryce

The group retraced their steps back to the gate and then continued up the track and over a deep gully to a meadow of damp acid grassland, there were more bluebells here as well as marsh thistle, tormentil, vetch and common knapweed, Joan was delighted to show us the leaf rosettes of

Mapperley Wood

common spotted orchids, watch this space!

Across the track were some viewing panels over meadow which has been sown with 'bird food' a lot of corn salad and wild cabbage was flowering. This was another space to watch!

Checking our plant recording card, we had recorded 76 plant species and seen some colourful wildflowers. We didn't really expect to see the bluebells flowering on this walk as it is a bit late in the season, but it was lucky for us the recent cold weather had kept them in suspended animation, waiting for our visit to Mapperley Wood.

Marion Bryce 13 May 2019

Attenborough Nature Reserve

Chilwell Canary Girls Memorial Walk

June 24 2019 Monday

Meet 7pm in Attenborough Nature Centre car park NG9 6DY for 2-3 mile walk on good paths and visit to memorial. Leader Mike Spencer

On the 101st anniversary of the Chilwell Factory explosion LENS members gathered in the car park of Attenborough Nature Reserve for the Canary Girls Memorial Walk. Mike showed us photographs of the Chilwell factory girls taken a week before the great explosion and also a photograph taken at Attenborough Train Station the morning after, showing the crowded up and down platforms as the nightshift made their way home.

Intrigued, we started our walk down the old Roman Road to Barton, over Tween Pond (in-between Attenborough and Clifton) where we paused for a photograph on this super-warm sultry evening.



LENS at Attenborough 24 June 2019

Photo credit Marion Bryce

Attenborough Nature Reserve

Some of the bridges are scheduled for removal when Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust have completed the purchase of the Attenborough Nature Reserve site from the CEMEX Gravel Company due to age and high maintenance costs. There are also plans to extend the visitor centre to house some of the 6000 archaeological finds from the Trent Gravels which include many axe heads and even ancient dug-out canoes.

We looked across Coneries Pond to Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station, greyed out in a haze, symptomatic of it's status, as it is being taken out of production. It was a proposal to infill the gravel pits at Attenborough with fly ash from the 'new' power station which provided the impetus for a group of people to propose that the gravel pits should be preserved and the Nature Reserve declared.

We were disappointed to be told that the sand martin bank had been raided by mink, all the adults and nestlings had been killed. Mink trapping is actively being carried out on site. Peeping through a wooden screen we could see a little egret which soon flew off dangling its gangly black legs showing off it's big yellow feet. We were amazed as two ponies walked along an extremely narrow strip of sand, displacing ducks and geese, right to the very end, where the water tastes so much better.



Ponies at Attenborough 24 June 2019

Photo credit Marion Bryce

At Kingfisher Hide we admired the reed beds which were grown and planted by volunteers, this has attracted booming bitterns which bred in 2016. The number of mute swans has increased to nearly 500 and there are also more than 50 grey herons on the site. The scrape has been especially designed to mimic the strip lynchets of the original farm field.

The river was very calm at Barton Ferry, there were memories of youthful camping expeditions to Barton Island and sadness that the old ferryman no longer rows people across.

Attenborough Nature Reserve



Alongside the river there is a cycle track with long grass either side which is never cut. Purple cymes of Tufted Vetch climbed the tall stalks of false oat grass, we also found a good patch of Ladies Bedstraw which is the only Galium with yellow flowers, the pink peas of Spiny Rest-harrow provided more delight. Hundreds of white umbels of hogweed were bare of insects, it is becoming obvious that agricultural chemicals are poisoning our environment and taking away the base of the foodchain upon which we all depend. The only insect we saw was one Golden Bloomed Longhorn Beetle on a stray poppy. It's larva grown cocooned in a wooden tree trunk screened from pesticides Halfway round Clifton Pond there is a screen which overlooks one of the few natural ponds left on the site. Busy binoculars spotted long-tailed tits, white-throat and sedge warbler. There was time for quiet contemplation, looking at ancient meadows across the river, where large rafts of Greylag and Canada geese acted as nurseries for this years goslings. We now walked faster past the old car park, now a colourful meadow, over the bridge between Tween Pond and Main Pond past the flood gates along the Strand where the houses are perched on an ancient ridge, so they never flood, and where Roman and Saxon remains have been found. With a swift left turn St Mary's Church came into view.



St Mary's Church Attenborough 24 June 2019

Photo credit Marion Bryce

We hurried through the churchyard keen to see the memorial but to our surprise we were ushered to pack in like sardines behind an old garden shed. Peeping over a high brick wall into the garden of Ireton House Mike gleefully showed us three historical fish ponds, a larder for the old Lenton Priory. What a surprise!. We turned back to the churchyard full of flowers, yellow Jerusalem sage, scented rambler rose gentle through leaning gravestones to the Canary Girls Memorial Cross. During the First World War Britain needed ammunition to hold the Western Front. Many shells were manufactured around the country and delivered to The National Shell Filling Factory at Chilwell, where they were filled with explosives. This was a highly dangerous operation. Women working on the site became known as Canary Girls because the poisonous Trinitrotoluene explosive they were handling, turned their skin yellow.

In the early evening on July 1st 1918 disaster struck. Eight tons of explosives detonated causing the biggest loss of life in a single explosion of the First World War. By the time the dust had settled, over 130 people lay dead, another 250 were injured. 25 of those who died in the blast were women.

Despite everything, the remaining workers went to the factory at 6.00am the following morning to report for their shifts. Though the end of the war was just five months away, munitions were still desperately needed at the front.

The Minister for Munitions, Winston Churchill, wrote: "The courage and spirit shown by all concerned, both men and women, command our admiration, and the decision to which you have all come to carry on without a break is worthy of the spirit which animates our soldiers in the field."

Publicly very little national recognition was given to what had happened, the government wanted to cover up the extent of the disaster so as not to affect war morale. It was reported in the newspapers as "60 feared dead in Midlands factory explosion."

The remains of the unidentified bodies were buried in three mass graves in the churchyard at St. Mary's. There is a grand memorial in Chetwynd Barracks with limited public access. On July 1st 2018 – a century after the tragedy – a new memorial was dedicated at St Mary's to commemorate the victims.

Greater love hath no person than this, that a person lay down his/her life for his/her country.

Marion Bryce 25 June 2019

Elvaston Local Nature Reserve

Elvaston Nature Reserve.

July 8 2019 Meet 7pm. Walk starts from cobbled courtyard. Can be very wet. Leader Elvaston Ranger

The sky was lowering as we met Bob Steffe, Derbyshire County Council Park Ranger, our host for the evening. The sky brightened as we stepped out across the park to the Local Nature Reserve.

The 13.5 hectare Elvaston Nature Reserve was declared in 1989. It is managed for wildlife so no dogs are allowed. It is connected to Elvaston Castle Country Park Lake and formal gardens by waterways diverted from the River Derwent. From the linking bridge we looked for the herons, they weren't fishing in the brown water this evening, but perched in the tree tops.

At the Nature Reserve Entrance there is a large information board where we posed for a photograph as we drank in the calm atmosphere of the dark ferny woodland. A path of light coloured stone showed the way to Kingfisher Hide, but the hide was not there! A large, leaning beech had persuaded the Rangers to rebuild the hide discretely further along the lakeside. We piled into the new hide and immediately there was a commotion as Stuart brought his 400mm lens into action.



The reserve contains veteran trees that were originally part of William Barron's landscape design from the 19th century. A huge narrow leaved ash and some large pine trees drew our eyes heavenwards where grey squirrels nest in the dense mass of tangled shoots of a witches broom. Nowadays, all planting is of native species. John Langford spotted a Great Spotted Woodpecker. Another bird of woodland, the Chiff Chaff kept repeating it's name, while the delightful fluting song of the Blackcap has earned it the name 'Northern Nightingale'.

A lot of work has been carried out by volunteers to clear intrusive Rhododendron and Himalayan Balsam, this has left bare ground available for native wildflowers to colonise. But, in places, head-high Stinging Nettles have taken over the damp woodland which together with the occasional dead hedge keep visitors to the path! Bob described his joy on finding the first plant of Yellow Archangel and then how crestfallen to discover it was yet another invasive alien, the Silver-leaved Yellow Archangel!

Feathery fronds of Lady Fern mixed with Male Fern and Lesser Pond Sedge along the stream we were following. By the Newt Pond is a Crack Willow which has been ring-barked to stop leaf-fall into the pond, but it hasn't got the message and continues to grow. Here the golden yellow cups of Marsh Marigold brighten up Spring days and is now spreading through the damp woodland together with Gipsywort and Water Figwort. We were soon diverted to the waterfall area which was a crescendo of fluffy white flowers of Meadow sweet, stabbing spear leaves of Yellow Iris with the blue tube flowers of Skullcap lurking below. The water is highly oxygenated here and regular invertebrate surveys are carried out to check the water quality.



To our delight, Enchanter's Nightshade, Jack by the hedge or Garlic Mustard and Ramsons or Wild Garlic are recolonising the woodland floor. We welcome these native plants for biodiversity and also as food plants for Orange-tip Butterflies, but Bob is from Michigan where Garlic Mustard is a designated pest species! Bob is a forager and would not hesitate to use Garlic Mustard in soup. He has used Ground-ivy to flavour beer, as it was used before the introduction of hops. He also has found that the root nodule of the ubiquitous Wood Avens is aromatic and used instead of Cloves as a cooking spice, after all Elvaston is closer to home than the exotic Indonesian Islands where Cloves are native!

An ingenious recycling of cut wood in the form of a vertical xylophone formed a gentle barrier, elsewhere a living willow screen was used. The reserve has a large reed bed area which is closed off to the public from January until June to allow privacy for nesting birds such as Reed Warbler, Sedge Warbler and Reed Bunting. We were privileged to enter this area which has a raised path between the reed-beds, with three islands which the Rangers clear for ground-nesting birds.



Elvaston Local Nature Reserve



We were now given a choice whether to go through Holly Arch or to Gretrick's Field. Deciding that it would be too dark through Holly Arch we walked past open water to Gretrick's Field which has undergone some intense management over the past 3 years providing a wide variety of plant species to enhance biodiversity. On the central part of the field a species-rich grass mix has created a meadow of fine leaved grass. Planting includes a game cover mix and areas of wild flowers to attract insects and provide opportunities for hunting dragonflies. To the south of the field, nut and fruit trees are a living bird table, providing food for a wide variety of birds. Straw manure provides egg laying and hibernation sites for grass snakes which may be seen basking in the field. Sadly the Sand Martin bank has been investigated but not yet colonised.



By the end of the walk Christine had a feather in her hat which may have been signs of a woodcock which, like LENS, had enjoyed a visit to Elvaston Local Nature Reserve.

Marion Bryce 8 July 2019

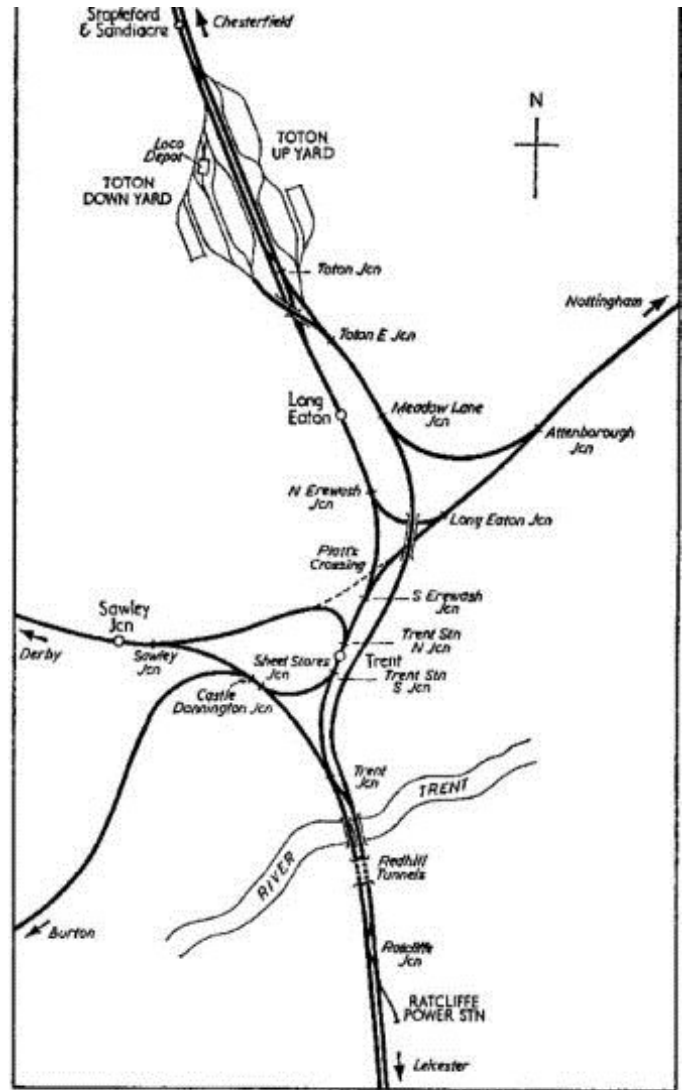
Pond Dipping and Wild Flower Trail at Forbes Hole

13 July 2019 10am-12noon. Fields Farm Road Long Eaton NG10 1FX. Leader Stuart Gilder Chairman of the Friends of Forbes Hole

'Railway Ponds are ecologically unique in Britain and perhaps also in Europe' said Max Wade of Loughborough University in 1981. Forbes Hole is one of the ponds cut out to supply ballast for the railway embankments. The original Midland Counties Railway line from Derby to Nottingham (1839), cut straight across from Sawley Junction to Platt's Crossing, where it crossed the Erewash Valley Line (of 1847) on the level. Long Eaton's first passenger station (1839-1862) was on this line, by the current Meadow Lane Crossing.

Pond Dipping and Wild-flower Trail at Forbes Hole

Fields Farm Road occupies much of the site of the western end of this original line and the remainder (the dotted section on the map) is now Forbes Hole car park and the foot-path running eastwards. Part of Network Rail's access road to the former Trent Station area is over the site of the 'North Curve' from the 1839 line to Trent Station North Junction.



The junctions at Trent

Forbes Hole has been intensely studied. The flora was first recorded in 1926 by Sir Harry Godwin and pond life records by Alan Heath (former Chairman of LENS Wildlife Group) and Neil Adcock. It received Local Nature Reserve status in 1991 go back to 1958. Conservation work was carried out for many years under the direction of Groundwork but it is now managed by Erewash Borough Council, the site owners, with the Friends of Forbes Hole.

LENS arranged a fun morning designed to discover some of the wildlife to be found at Forbes Hole. The weather was good and the pond, although becoming overgrown with reeds, has plenty of aquatic invertebrates. We set up the pond dipping equipment overlooking 'the beach'. This is an area of fine silt which grows the most splendid wildflowers.

Pond Dipping and Wild-flower Trail at Forbes Hole

With busy nets seeking among the reed stems, soon we had on display an interesting variety of water invertebrates from the pond. Dragonfly and damselfly and mayfly larvae, common newt, fish, snails, wandering, ramshorn and bithnyid, midge larvae, shrimp and pond slater, backswimmers and lesser water boatmen and saucer bugs. Also an Erpobdelid leech which showed off its impressive elasticity, shortening and lengthening as, led by its head sucker, it explored our discovery tray.



Come look at this shouted Stuart from 'the beach'. He had found a very large longhorn beetle, *Stenocorus meridianus*, feeding on wild carrot. Longhorn beetles are very special. Their larvae feed inside rotten wood, emerging several years later as spectacular large and colourful adults. We had a real photo frenzy on this one.



Stuart then led a walk around the Nature Reserve showing off the work that has been carried out by the Friends of Forbes Hole. Down the ride some sycamore has been cleared and disease-resistant Elm trees have been planted. These were given to the Friends of Forbes Hole by Butterfly Conservation in order to encourage the spread of White-letter Hairstreak butterflies, which have been seen locally. The tarmac path alongside the railway line is the former public and railwayman's path to Trent Railway Station (1862-1967) where the Royal Train used to park. The hedge alongside is relatively new, and has young specimens of Buckthorn, Field Maple and Dogwood, which are kept trimmed.



A wildflower trail had been created on the colourful meadow with 12 labelled specimen plants to be found: Knapweed, Burnet saxifrage, Meadow Vetchling, Birds-foot Trefoil, Yellow Rattle and Perforate St John's Wort, typical hay meadow plants. There was also Soapwort, Tufted Vetch, Hogweed, Rosebay Willowherb and Common Ragwort which are plants more usually found by the railway. Many orange and black striped cinnabar moth caterpillars were eating the ragwort. The butterflies put on a good display with plenty of Meadow Browns, Ringlets and Skippers and also a Painted Lady.



Pond Dipping and Wild-flower Trail at Forbes Hole

Our guests, hopefully by now with enhanced wildflower recognition skills, were then led back through the mixed Willow woodland where nest-boxes have been installed for Great-tits and Blue-tits, and rot-boxes (water-proof boxes filled with wood shavings to encourage hover-flies and add to the biodiversity of the site.

Meanwhile back at the pond dipping station we had enjoyed the amazing aerial skills of a host of dragonflies, Emperors, Chasers, Skimmers and Darters. A list had been made of the invertebrates which showed that the water is of moderate quality.

Thank you to the Friends of Forbes Hole who gave their time for the Pond Dipping and Wild Flower Trail at Forbes Hole: Christine Carrier, Stuart Gilder, Derek Brumbill and Marion Bryce. The work party team, Mick Granger, Roe Langford, Peter Hunt, John Haynes, Brian Sewell and Martin Birkinshaw, and an especial acknowledgment to John Langford who kindly provided information on the history of the site.

Marion Bryce 13 July 2019

LENS Visit to Lightwood Nature Reserve

Date 10 August 2019

Directions Meet at the end of Lightwood Road, Buxton SK17 7AA Grid Ref SK053 754

After driving through pouring rain we arrived at Buxton ready for a good soaking. However the weather was kind to us and although we seemed to be surrounded by a damp water mist we didn't experience any heavy rain. The light was poor so we were reluctant to get our cameras out, but Steve came up with a helpful suggestion, apparently there is a new compact camera which is waterproof, drop-proof, crushproof, dustproof and freeze-proof, this sounds like a good option for our wildlife wanders!

Lightwood Reservoir was constructed in the nineteenth century but was drained in 2004. The V-shaped sides have been 'softened' by landscape works when Nestle took over the site. So, instead of a steep sided reservoir we have a delightful valley in the middle of high heather moorland. The Hogshaw Brook scours the valley bottom as it crashes over gritstone boulders but there is also a series of

Lightwood Reservoir



We met at the bottom of Lightwood Road, this is a dead-end which leads onto a track past some old water treatment buildings, over the brook and into the Nature Reserve where the long grass laid flat with rain, was peppered with the round leaves of coltsfoot, 'the son before the father'. The yellow coltsfoot flowers now finished instead we saw the white flat heads of the feathery leaved aromatic yarrow, egg and bacon or bird's foot trefoil, we pondered on the vernacular such as Jack-by-the-hedge (mustard garlic) and Jack-go-to-bed-before-noon (goatsbeard). Jack was such a nuisance weed in the old days but now we value these plants for their ecological credentials. We spent some time searching among the wildflowers on the grassy valley floor for orchids. The pink clouds of wild basil trumpets impressed, and we saw the tallest bee-orchid we had ever seen. Some common spotted orchids were still flowering but we could not find the twayblade or fragrant orchid which had been seen just two weeks ago. Steve rued the events of World Water Day when trees, including goat willow, had been planted on the wonderful wildflower meadow and are now starting to shade out the wild flowers, hopefully the new



Lightwood Reservoir

management plan, may address these issues.

Where were the insects? Steve, who carries out a regular butterfly transect at this site could not believe that nothing was flying. Our eyes sharpened and we began to see there were dozens of immobile small skippers with wings closed, batteries flat, perfectly camouflaged beige on beige, stick legs clamped around plant stems or clinging to brown seed heads. As the day progressed a few hover flies emerged and, huge and harmless, the red-legged St Mark's Fly. Marking the onset of Autumn, hairy hawkbits launched celebratory seed umbrellas but the staid brown oval flower head of ribwort plantain has only two fertile seeds which rudely protrude.

Hooray, it's raining, green marsh froghoppers and meadow grasshoppers were leaping for joy among the rushes and reeds which have colonised the marshy valley floor. At the water's edge, pale purple water mint jostles with yellow monkey flower. The ponds named number one to five support large populations of amphibians, common frog, common toad, common and palmate newts we had to be careful where we trod. The small pond was overgrown with water horsetail and broad-leaved pondweed covered another, but the big ponds showed clear water. All of this makes dragonfly heaven, Steve has recorded 15 species of dragonfly including black darter and golden ringed dragonflies. But, today was not going to be about dragonflies, search as we might.

Plodding uphill, Harebells of the most delicate hue, nodded among red fescue, which turned to purple moorgrass and wavy hair grass and soon we were among the heather, although it was us, not the pink pollen which was puffing today. We watched a sparrowhawk hunting below with cuckoo rock behind us. There were fabulous views of Buxton, over to Solomon's Tower and even to the, multi-denominational, Curbar Cross.



According to T Howard, in 1879 there was a borehole at Lightwood to a depth of 243 yards. In 2015 Nestlé submitted a detailed planning application for a proposed borehole and associated building on land located towards the northern end of Lightwood Road Buxton to provide a new water supply for the Nestlé Waters bottling plant on Waterswallows Lane. Everything that goes around comes around, enjoy it while it lasts!



Marion Bryce 10 August 2019



We headed uphill towards Flint Edge, tall but delicate pink valerian, sneezewort, white plates like oversized yarrow and blue devil's bit scabious were attractive, but, most exciting for us was to see the lousewort (much smaller than expected) and fen bedstraw. This was a first and, good news, easy to identify as it has hooked barbules like it's ubiquitous relative goose-grass. It would have been interesting to see the marsh valerian which has been found on site, but this flowers earlier.

Our Staff are trained in



Netherfield Lagoons

LENS visit to Netherfield Lagoons July 29 Head for Colwick and Victoria Retail Park. Park near end of Teal Close opposite CEM works, NG4 2PE, grid ref SK 628 411. Good paths. A rich and varied wildlife. Leader Peter Smith



On a bright sunny day we visited Netherfield Lagoons, a site owned by UK Coal until Gedling Pit closed in 2005. The site was taken over by the Gedling Conservation Trust and designated by Natural England as a Local Nature Reserve. Incidentally I recommend the Netherfield Lagoons website for wildlife identification, having recently used it to identify a dragonfly seen in my garden!

As we approached the site along a narrow stream Pete Smith, our guide, pointed out a horse radish plant, starwort growing in the water, common darter dragonflies, banded demoiselle damselflies, ringlet butterflies, minnows swimming in the sunshine and crowds of peacock caterpillars on the fresh-leaved stinging nettles lining the path.

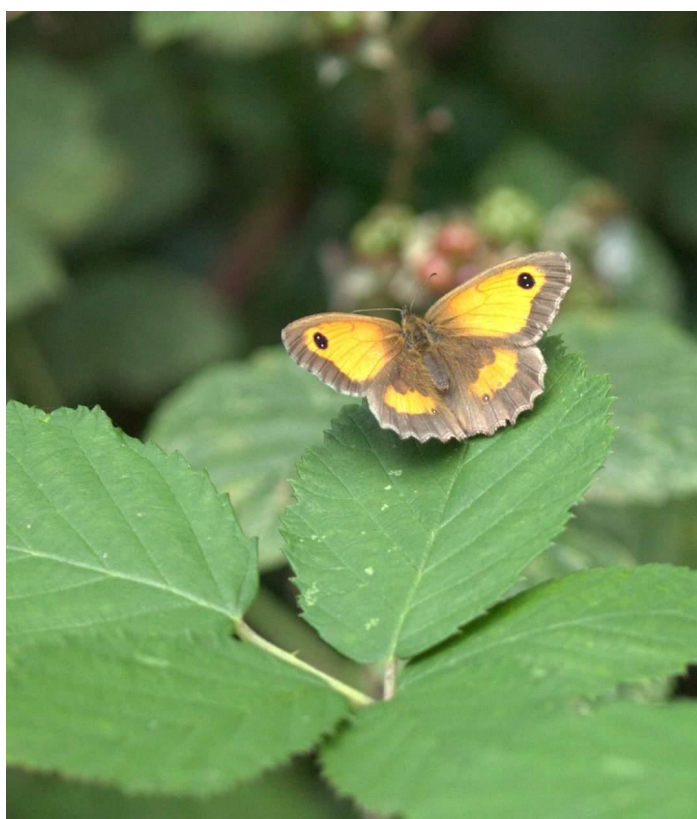
This wealth of wildlife continued as we entered the reserve. We decided to take the lower path, where many hoverflies can be seen, and return later by the side of the lagoons. *Chrysotoxum festivum*, a rare visitor here, was seen almost immediately on convolvulus. Pete told us that the site is home to 90 species of hoverfly! He wanted to show us the impressive hornet hoverfly *Volucella zonaria*, but sadly it did not show itself in its favourite haunts. of the comma, and painted ladies, which have been ubiquitous this year. Pete told us how gatekeepers can easily be sexed, as the males have a dark line in their forewings.

Forewings. The insects were numerous – six-spot burnet moths mating, coneheads, marsh grasshoppers, the marmalade hoverfly, darkling beetle, longhorn beetles, cranesbill weevil, leaf-cutter bees, sepsis fly, bee-grabber conopid fly (which eats bees from the inside), and much more. To our amusement a twin-lobed deer fly settled on Stuart's cheek, and out came the cameras!

It wasn't the best time of year for birds, but we heard young sparrowhawks, as there was a nest on site. There are also water shrews, three types of bat, eighteen types of dragonfly and damselfly, many unusual wildflowers with dittander and the chinese blackberry being seen near the end of the walk.

Our plans made earlier didn't quite work out as a very deep 'puddle' formed from the previous day's heavy rain made the path unpassable. So we turned around and returned by the same path. This meant we didn't actually see the lagoons which give the site its name! However we had seen many other interesting things and were happy to have discovered another rewarding wildlife site.

Joan Breakwell 29 July 2019



Gatekeeper at Netherfield Lagoons 29 July 2019

Photo credit Stuart Gilder

Dormouse Monitoring

15 September Dormouse Monitoring

Leader Lorna Griffiths, Chair, Notts Dormouse Group at Treswell Wood near Retford.



We met Lorna Griffiths, Chair, Notts Dormouse Group with other members of the group at Treswell. She kept up a constant flow of information throughout a busy and exciting dormouse monitoring session in the wood.

Hazel dormice are adorable with red-brown fur, a long furry tail and big eyes (because they are nocturnal). They are native and should not be confused with the edible dormouse which is found in Surrey. The edible dormouse is an alien species which can have a devastating effect on the native fauna. The first record of common or hazel dormice in Derbyshire was in 1882, but JW Carr's 1900 Zoology of Nottinghamshire has no mention. There have been sporadic records up to a 1968 re-introduction of the species which was deemed to have been unsuccessful. It was not until after a second re-introduction under the strict guidelines of the Dormouse Monitoring Scheme, that it became known that there had been an occasional record of a dormouse at the original re-introduction site.

A dormouse introduction involves fixing a minimum of 50 nestboxes in a grid 10m apart in a managed hazel coppice

with scrub and some oak, ash and birch canopy trees, like at Treswell Wood. This provides, nuts, fruit and invertebrate food throughout the year. Dormice are introduced by placing a pair in a nestbox in a transition cage. The dormice are fed for a few weeks until they move out into the wood which is coppiced on a 7 year rotation. It takes 3 years for newly coppiced hazel to produce the nuts which dormice eat after nibbling a neat round hole in the shell. There are now 180 boxes at Treswell which are monitored monthly. Regular reintroductions from one of 600 other sites take place to maintain genetic diversity.

The nestboxes are like wooden bird boxes with a removable lid, but the holes (too small for most birds) are at the back. Woodmice too often move in and are evicted, but Lorna allows pygmy shrews to stay. The nests are a round ball of woven grass and leaves with a cosy tunnel to the middle where the female dormice live communally in the summer, in winter the dormice hibernate underground or in trees. Treswell Wood is divided into sections and our team pushed through bramble and scrub to find the 20 boxes for monitoring in today's section. When a box is sighted, silence prevails. One person tiptoes up to the box and inserts a duster bung to contain the occupants. The nestbox is then removed from the tree and the nest gently probed for the presence of rodents. Yes, they do bite. If dormice are present they are gently contained in a large bag and individually bagged, examined for unusual characteristics such as a white tip to the tail, sexed, measured and weighed. Meticulous notes are made on the spot including the nature of the nest.

The dormice scampered away from the first two nestboxes, some running vertically up the tree trunk, others swinging like miniature monkeys through the brambles, clinging to creepers using their thick furry tail. One of the nestboxes contained a female with 6 sub-adults. The dormice have to be gently persuaded back into the nestbox which is replaced on the tree. Lastly the bung is removed and the search for the next nestbox begins. Our group were so lucky because a group in a different section did not find any dormice that day.

It only costs £5 a year to join the Nottinghamshire Dormouse Monitoring Group and members can take part in as many monthly monitoring sessions as they wish. Lorna has advised on Dormouse Conservation and re-introduction in the UK and abroad. She loves dormice (and pygmy shrews) and they are very lucky to have such a hard working and charismatic champion.

Marion Bryce

15 September 2019



Let Them Eat Bread?

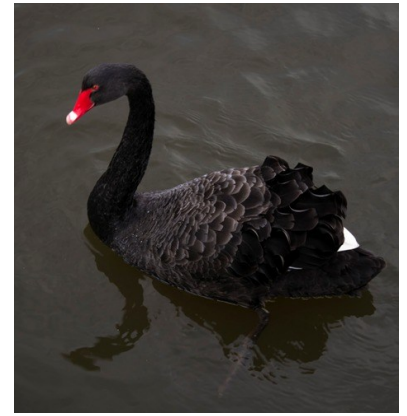
For countless years one of the simple pleasures of life has been to take children to the local pond and feed bread to the ducks. But recently there has been much discussion over whether it is OK to feed bread to ducks and swans.

According to the RSPB, most of the time, swans and ducks are capable of feeding themselves on naturally available foods such as waterside vegetation, waterweed, frogs, small fish, molluscs and other invertebrates, but a small amount of bread is not going to harm the waterfowl.

But bread has low nutritional value, giving a feeling of being full despite lack of essential dietary requirements. If too much is eaten, it may result in healthy foods being ignored.

In addition, if too much bread is fed and remains uneaten, it may pollute the water in a pond.

In freezing weather, supplementary feeding may be essential, while bread is not the healthiest choice, a little bit along with other more healthy foods such as wheat, oats, peas or other vegetable matter, will be fine.



**Black Swan at Attenborough
5 November 2019**

Photo credit Marion Bryce

Banish the Blues with Wildlife Photography

Going for walks and taking photographs of natural objects and wildlife can banish the blues.

The action of natural light on our skin interacts with our physiology to promote feelings of well being.

We know that a brisk walk can improve our circulation and make us think more positively but photography, in addition, requires technical skill, provides an artistic outlet and takes patience.

There is something calming in wildlife photography, sitting still in a quiet bird hide for hours on end, slows us down compared to the fast pace of modern society and provides an easy way to get away from it all.

there is peace behind the camera as we focus complete attention, non-judgementally, onto a natural object, losing ourselves in the present moment.

This promotes mindfulness and worries fade away as the camera starts to click and take pictures.



**Margaret Beresford and Alan Heath
2 August 2008**

Photo credit Marion Bryce

Toad Rescue 2019

Stuart Gilder organised a fifth year of Toad Rescue at Church Wilne. This year, students from Derby University assisted in the toad patrol.

The patrols started at dusk and continued for approximately 1.5hrs each evening along Wilne Lane from St Chads to the Reservoir entrance.

The toad migration was spread over a number of weeks. Patrols took place from the 2nd March to 8th April with the temperature see-sawing between 6 and 14 degrees C.

Extremely wet weather conditions were experienced with the road being completely flooded on several occasions.

Household gloves were worn to protect the delicate skin of the amphibians as they were plucked from the road and transported to the pond in buckets. In total 139 male and 48 female toads were helped across the road, 4 frogs and 2 smooth newts.

9 toads were seen killed on the road.

The evening with the highest count was on the 16th March when 59 live toads were counted (2 were killed).

These figures are low compared to 2017 with 246 toads rescued and 47 toads killed but slightly up on last year's total of 128 toads.



Common Toad

Photo credit Marion Bryce

LENS Long Eaton Natural History Society Wildlife Group

CONTACTS

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Lensnaturalhistory@gmail.com

LENS Wildlife Group Winter Programme 2019-2020

9 September	Margaret Bullock	The National Memorial Arboretum
14 October	AGM	Members Presentations
11 November	Kieran Huston	Crich Chase
9 December	Fay Blackburn	Christmas Quiz and Social
13 Jan 2020	Graham Pearce	Trees or Poisonous Plants
10 Feb 2020	Bill Cove	All About Deer
9 March 2020	Chris Madge	The Derby and Sandiacre Canal Project

Cost £1.50 for members, £2.50 for visitors.

All welcome.

See LENS [Wildlife Group website](#) for regular updates.



Wild Hop at Clover Close Elvaston

Photo credit Marion Bryce

Thanks to all contributors and Stuart Gilder, Patricia, and Marion Bryce, for photographs used.
Send articles and photographs to Lensnaturalhistory@gmail.com
Deadline for next LENS bulletin March 2019
Bulletin Editor Marion Bryce

We would like you to join LENS and the Friends of Forbes Hole in practical conservation activities

Forbes Hole Local Nature Reserve, Fields Farm Road, Long Eaton NG10 1FX

Wear old clothes and boots and bring gloves and a flask

10am Mondays

See you there!



LENS at LES Nature Corridor 24 March 2019

Photo credit Marion Bryce

LENS Stuart Gilder, Lynsey, and Michael Granger clear a path around Long Eaton School Nature Corridor with Angela Barratt (also present, Peter Hunt and Marion Bryce). Long Eaton School have received a grant for enhancement of biodiversity on this site.

Membership Renewal Form

I would like to be a member of LENS Wildlife Group

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Tel no _____

Email _____

I enclose a cheque/postal order for £10.00

The annual subscription entitles members to attend meetings at £1.50 per session.

I agree that LENS can keep my name on a database but will delete it on request.

Please return completed form to

LENS Wildlife Group Hon Treasurer, Roe Langford
136 Breedon Street, Long Eaton NG10 4FE