

# LENS Wildlife Watch

**LENS Long Eaton Natural  
History Society Wildlife  
Group**

Autumn 2022

Volume 2 Issue 30

## Alan Heath DSc

Congratulations to Dr Alan Heath, awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science by Nottingham Trent University on 8 April 2022.

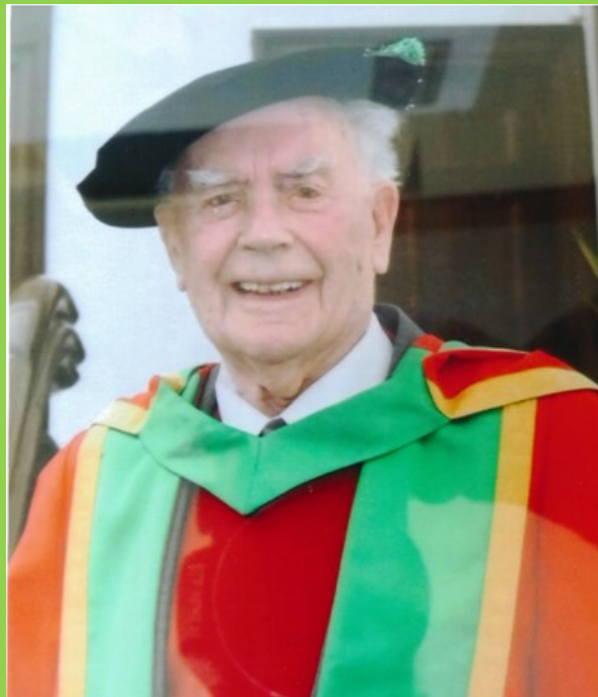
The citation recognised his work in Astronomy, Natural History and Meteorology. Alan, is a former Chairman of Nottingham Astronomical Society and was Director of the Saturn Section for 30 years. He still watches the skies through his 10in reflecting telescope.

His work as a naturalist was cited:

Alan was awarded a Fellowship of the British Naturalists Association in 2017.

He is an active member and former Chairman of Long Eaton Natural History Society.

Alan is also well known as Long Eaton's Weatherman



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## Rotary Club Fun Day



Rotary Club Fun Day 22 August 2022

Photo credit Marion Bryce

In August, hundreds of families descended on West Park for a FREE FUN DAY. Joan Breakwell's Tree Quiz was popular while Marion Bryce was busy making Bumble Bees and testing insect knowledge, but the favourite activity on a sunny summer's day, was Penny Newton's Hook a Duck. More than 500 children were successful and earned their LENS badge.

[Erewash Borough Council  
Local Nature Reserves](#)

Join Erewash Tree Wardens  
Contact: Jaimey Richards  
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[JaimeyRichards@erewash.gov.uk](mailto:JaimeyRichards@erewash.gov.uk)

[www.lensweb.wordpress.com](http://www.lensweb.wordpress.com)

# RE-WILDING WEST PARK

## Baseline Survey - Marion Bryce

Common Name	A	B	C
Creeping Bent	0	2	3
Burdock Lesser	0	0	1
Soft-brome	0	1	0
Common Knapweed	0	2	2
Spindle	0	1	0
Red Fescue	0	2	3
Dove's-foot Crane's-bill	0	2	2
Small Flowered Crane's-bill	0	0	2
Hogweed	0	0	2
Oxeye Daisy	0	2	0
Bird'sfoot Trefoil	0	0	1
Pineappleweed	0	2	2
Scented Mayweed	0	0	2
Amphibious Bistort	0	3	0
Rough Meadow-grass	0	3	0
Creeping Cinquefoil	0	2	2
Blackthorn	0	2	0
Japanese Rose	0	1	0
Campion White	0	0	1
Lesser Stitchwort	0	2	2
Upright Hedge-parsley	0	2	0
Lesser Trefoil	0	0	3
Red Clover	0	2	2
Scentless Mayweed	0	2	0
Slender Speedwell	0	2	0
American Willowherb	1	0	0
Broad-leaved Willowherb	1	0	0
Meadowsweet	1	0	0
Holly	1	1	0
Common Ragwort	1	1	2
Nipplewort	1	0	0
Common Mallow	1	0	0
Common Sorrel	1	0	0
Curled Dock	1	2	1
Prickly Sow-thistle	1	0	0
Yarrow	2	2	2
Garlic Mustard	2	0	0
False Oat-grass	2	2	0
Mugwort	2	0	0
Spear Thistle	2	2	0
Smooth Hawk's-beard	2	2	3
Cat's-ear	2	0	2
Swine-cress	2	2	0
Black Medick	2	0	0
Timothy	2	0	2
Knotgrass	2	0	0
Meadow Buttercup	2	1	0
Dog-rose	2	1	0

Hedge Mustard	2	0	0
Perennial Sow-thistle	2	0	0
Smooth Sow-thistle	2	0	0
Yellow Oat-grass	2	0	0
Creeping Yellowcress	2	0	0
Thyme-leaved Speedwell	2	2	0
Ground-elder	3	0	0
Common Bent	3	3	4
Meadow Foxtail	3	2	2
Cow Parsley	3	0	0
Daisy	3	3	0
Hedge Bindweed	3	0	0
Shepherd's-purse	3	1	2
Common Mouse-ear	3	2	0
Sticky Mouse-ear	3	3	0
Creeping Thistle	3	3	2
Hawthorn	3	3	0
Cock's-foot	3	3	3
Great Willowherb	3	0	0
Cleavers	3	0	0
Herb-Robert	3	0	0
Herb Bennet	3	0	0
Ground-ivy	3	0	0
Ivy	3	0	0
Ribwort Plantain	3	3	3
Greater Plantain	3	4	2
Annual Meadow-grass	3	3	3
Smooth Meadow-grass	3	4	3
Selfheal	3	2	3
Bulbous Buttercup	3	0	0
Creeping Buttercup	3	3	3
Bramble	3	3	1
Broad-leaved Dock	3	2	0
Elder	3	1	0
Dandelion	3	3	3
Elm	3	0	0
Common Nettle	3	2	0
Germander Speedwell	3	0	0
Yorkshire-fog	4	4	4
White Clover	4	3	4
Perennial Rye-grass	5	5	5
	<b>64</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>37</b>

Abundance	
0	Absent
1	1 only
2	Rare
3	Locally Common
4	Common
5	Dominant

# RE-WILDING EREWASH

The term rewilding originally referred to large-scale restoration of ecosystems with the aim of minimal human management so that natural processes shape the landscape and its habitats. Recently it has become a term that is used to describe any kind of wildlife friendly natural habitat creation, eg creating a wildflower meadow in a park or planting a small area of new woodland and even just a general relaxation in the management of green space.

Following a request from Mr Guy Burgess Erewash Borough Council has several minor rewilding projects underway.

Richard Ashley the Operations Manager mapped three areas on West Park where summer mowing would cease. These were A: by the Fox Covert,

B Beside footpath at 90 degrees to this

C: a strip by the Brook near the historic Fishpond Shelter.

See opposite page for results of a base-line plant survey of the three areas.

It did not take long for bees, dragonflies, butterflies, grasshoppers and other pollinators to move in.

In addition to these areas, a flowerbed was cultivated and sown with native wildflower seeds.

This is a small beginning At present there is no intention to restrict public access to re-wilded areas which would improve the habitat for wildlife.

Public engagement is needed to provide the will and means to re-establish natural ecosystems and promote a healthy environment.



**Guy Burgess West Park Re-wilding  
7 July 2022  
Photo credit Marion Bryce**

# FORBES HOLE

Stefan Majer, Bryan Sewell, John Haynes and Marion have continued work parties 10-12 on Fridays. Roe continues litter sweep on Mondays. Stefan met the Green Flag Judges with Jaimey Richards.

A bench memorial for Stuart (Friends of Forbes Hole) and Damson tree from Tree Wardens have been installed but the wildflower area to be planted by the industrial estate did not materialize although they did refurbish the sign.

A big pile of debris on the beach left over from reed removal has had the height lowered but there is still a lot to be moved, meanwhile several further

sessions of reed removal have taken place, paths and beach kept clear battling air pollution which promotes rank weeds.

A throwline has been installed by EBC who also replaced the look-out fence, mowed the meadow mid-August and removed cuttings.

The Swans and their cygnets were killed by a Fox but a new pair of swans nested and had 5 cygnets.

Throughout the hot dry summer the popular reserve provided much needed shade for visitors.



**John Haynes and Bryan Sewell work  
at Forbes Hole 13 May 2022  
Photo credit Marion Bryce**

# BIRD FLU

13 dead birds were found at Straw's Bridge Local Nature Reserve in March. Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 was confirmed on 22 April 2022. A 3km Protection Zone and 10km Surveillance Zone were put in place.

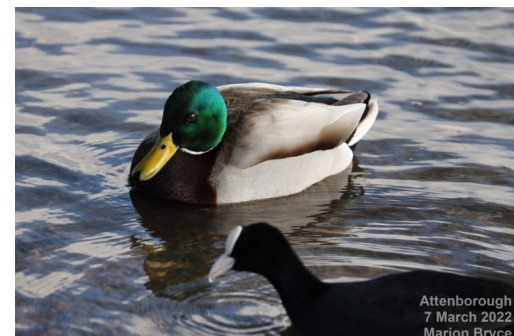
In the protection zone all captive birds had to be caged to minimise contact with wild birds, visitors to premises logged, all contaminated birds and litter disposed and disinfected. Movement of birds restricted. No bird shows could take place. Following successful completion of disease control activities and surveillance within the disease control

zone, the 3km Protection Zone ended and the 10km Surveillance Zone was revoked on 6 July 2022.

Attenborough Nature Reserve staff were traumatised by a mass death of birds in July. Birds already distressed by heat had died of avian flu. The Nature Centre was fenced off, all bird feeding stopped and dogs had to be kept on leads.

The risk to humans from Avian Flu remains very low if people follow good hygiene such as washing hands regularly.

Help by reporting dead birds, call the Defra helpline (03459 33 55 77)



**Attenborough Nature Reserve  
7 March 2022  
Photo credit Marion Bryce**

# West Park Tree Trail

The establishment of a major open space for the enjoyment of the people of Long Eaton began in 1905 when 17 acres of land was bought. Further land purchases, including the Fox Covert (now a Local Nature Reserve), increased the area to 127 acres, creating West Park, the largest park in the Borough of Erewash.

Together with the Trees in the Grounds of Trent College, West Park forms one of the largest arboreta in the County of Derbyshire. The West Park Tree Trail was developed by Council Officer Martin Latimer in the late 1970s and recently rewritten by Tree Officer Jaimey Richards. This is a self-guided trail but today, with the sun shining, LENS Wildlife Group led a guided tour under the banner of Erewash Walking Week.

We walked to the grand Main Entrance Gates of West Park on Wilsthorpe Road which were purchased from Aston Hall and installed in 1932. These have a Swan emblem on the top which is unusual as only the Queen can sanction use of this emblem in the UK, some people think the gates were made by local master craftsman Robert Bakewell, but others say they were originally from a French Chateau.



**West Park Tree Trail 17 April 2022**  
Photo Credit Marion Bryce



magnificent colonnade of Copper Beech leads into the Park and this is the site of the first tree on the Tree Trail. Beech trees are broad-leaved trees native to the south of England but extensively planted in the north where they are used for furniture making. The Copper Beech is a purple leaved sport of the native tree, which looks very attractive today as the sun shines through the new pink leaves.

The Atlas Cedar is not on the new Tree Trail Leaflet. Cedarwood! We didn't want to miss the chance of doing some exercise so, as taught by Mr David Pinney, Arboretum Keeper of Trent College, we demonstrated the 3 types of cedar commonly found in British Parks. Arms up for Atlas Cedar, holding up the world, arms straight out at the side for Cedar of Lebanon, and arms hanging limply



**Atlas Cedar Cone 17 April 2022**  
Photo Credit Marion Bryce

by our sides for the fragrant hanging branches of the Deodar Cedar. The cone of the Atlas Cedar has been described as a wasp's nest with a hollow in the top. Discuss!

Joan's favourite tree is the London Plane with its dangling pompom fruits. This tree can shed it's bark of many colours,

to combat pollution, so is often planted along busy roads.

Just across the path is the Tulip Tree with it's lime green Art Deco shaped leaf, we can look forward to seeing the Tulip Tree flowers in June.



**West Park Tulip Tree and Plaque 17 April 2022**  
Photo Credit Marion Bryce

There's no trouble identifying the trees as every tree on the Tree Trail has it's own name plaque on a pedestal. Maria was keen to have a go at 'Brass' rubbing. Secure a piece of Tracing paper to the bronze former with masking tape and away you go, rubbing with a wax crayon, to create an instant souvenir. You can make your own book!

Crack Willow is very commonly seen alongside water courses as a bent tree cracking under it's own weight so this upright park example is barely recognisable but we could see the soft, furry, willow catkins. Willow has separate male and female trees and sighting yellow pollen confirmed this as a male tree. Next, the Norway Maple is sometimes considered an invasive alien in nature reserves, but this purple leaved variety with posies of yellow flowers looks rather good in the park setting.

Red Oak has huge sharp pointed oak leaves which turn a magnificent red in autumn, but the reason it is called Red Oak is because of the colour of the wood when it is cut. In contrast, the False Acacia or Locust Tree looked lifeless at this time of the year, but some people found its zigzag branches and grooved bark attractive. In the summer when it flowers it looks like a laburnum with dangling yellow pea flowers, but the False Acacia is not so poisonous. It is a nitrogen fixer in the Pea Family which spreads by suckers, so can be invasive.

Everybody loved the Whitebeam Tree with its silvery haired leaves which are so bright, this tree used to be used as a boundary marker. Then the Broadleaf Cockspur

# West Park Tree Trail contd

Thorn which is a lot prettier than it's name. It is a small long lived tree. We could see a broad bulging scar at the base of the trunk where it had been grafted onto a native thorn rootstock.

Now that's what I call a tree! A huge Common Ash, holding onto last year's keys, late into leaf, omnipresent in the English Countryside. The black tips of the branches reminded us of Ash Wednesday when people blacken their faces in repentance. Maria remembered a cross of ashes drawn on her forehead at Sunday School. Will our Ash tree's isolated situation save it from Ash Dieback,



**Single-leaf Ash 4 August 2022**  
Photo Credit Marion Bryce

the fungal disease which is spreading through the countryside killing many of our iconic Ash trees? Even the Single Leaf Ash, which is the most unusual tree on the park, (it has single leaves rather than compound leaves) may be susceptible to Ash Dieback.

A lot of people like the Purple-leaved Plum which is one of the first trees in the year to flower, most of the flowers had finished on our visit but we admired the masses of purple leaves. Silver Birch is a native tree, our two large specimens were coated with green algae hiding the silver bark. The open canopy of the Silver Birch makes it a suitable candidate for replacing ash trees in woodland so that the ground flora can be maintained.

Silver Maple is another behemoth which lives alongside humans in the modern age. In Canada it is tapped for Maple Syrup and the Maple leaf is the symbol on the red and white flag. The Sweet Gum or Liquidamber is from East Asia and was definitely not putting out any leaves until the warm weather arrives. Although the leaves look a bit like sycamore on LSD (very colourful) the fruits are weird gumballs with spikes containing seeds which are dispersed by mammals in the wild.

The Maidenhair Tree looks like a dead twig at this time of the year, but can you believe it is the oldest tree in the world? The fossil record shows it was around when dinosaurs roamed the Earth. They are very long-lived with specimens over 2000 years old in China. The curious fan-shaped leaf is used in folk medicine. Almost all of the trees planted in the UK are males, the female trees produce fruits that smell very unpleasant.

It was Joan's husband, Keith Breakwell who had the idea to plant Giant Redwoods as a 'Skylon' feature to lead people to the centre of the park. The tree which we know as Wellingtonia has been renamed Sequoia as part of the fightback over the British Empire. These 20 year old trees are just babies, when they are older the red trunks will gleam like a beacon and the hairy bark covering will provide refuge for many insects in winter.



After crossing the Golden Brook we paused to admire the Scot's Pine Trees, red and grey plates of armour coat the trunk, the needles are short and blue-green in

clusters of two. Pine Trees in Parks can be difficult to identify as there are many similar looking species.



**Foxglove Tree**  
**17 April 2022**

Photo Credit Marion Bryce

We found the Foxglove Tree covering by a fast growing Hornbeam. Some fuzzy flower buds were showing among the open beaked egg shaped fruit cases, looking forward to seeing the purple flowers in summer.

The oldest tree on West Park is probably the Common or Pedunculate Oak, it could be at least 250 years old possibly planted to provide shelter for livestock on the Harrington Estate, as was, before Long Eaton Urban District Council purchased the land for the people of Long Eaton, and West Park was opened for public enjoyment.

The last tree on the Tree Trail is the Sweet Chestnut, with last year's spiky fruits still lying on the ground. It is said to have been introduced by the Romans for food, but the summers here are usually too cool for the nuts to ripen, luckily the Easter Bunny had been. We all agreed it had been a tree-mendous walk and ate our Easter Eggs - Happy Easter to one and all!

## LANGFORD LOWFIELDS - John Langford

**LENS Langfield Lowlands Monday 9th May 10.30-13.40**

Blackbird	Black-headed Gull
Song Thrush	Common Tern
Blackcap	Cormorant
Chiffchaff	Mute Swan
Willow Warbler	Canada Goose
Whitethroat	Greylag Goose
Lesser Whitethroat	Grey Heron
Sedge Warbler	Little Egret
Cetti's Warbler	Coot
Robin	Mallard
Wren	Tufted Duck
Carrion Crow	Pochard (M&F)
Magpie	Gadwall
Kestrel	Great Crested Grebe
Hobby	Oystercatcher

Total 30 species (many heard not seen)

I can't recall hearing Blue tit, Great tit Long-tailed tit, House Sparrow or any of the finches.

John Langford 9/5/22 (see article P 7)

# RED RIVER AND LOSCOE DAM - Marion Bryce

## **Mon Apr 25 Loscoe Dam & Red River Local Nature Reserves Leader Brian Gough**

Meet 10.30am on Taylor Lane, Loscoe, a right turn off the A6007 from Heanor to Codnor by the recycling centre. Park at end of lane.  
DE75 7TA Grid ref SK 425 475

A nature reserve with an evocative name like Red River is worthy of further investigation. So it was that 14 LENS members met under a glooming sky on the first summer walk of 2022. We crossed a busy road heading towards a huge yellow painted winding wheel, a reminder of the old Loscoe colliery which closed in 1933. The nearby Ormonde Pit produced its last coal on 25 September 1970 "the end of an era". The retreat of industry can be the Natural Historians gain and we slipped into the Nature Reserve where Brian gave a brief history of the site.

Red River is a tiny Nature Reserve, only 1.3 Ha but it is a miraculous survivor, part of a centuries old water supply complex to a mill owned by Loscoe Manor. All of the buildings have disappeared as successive waves of mining, for copper, for iron and for coal, devastated the landscape. The mill leat or Red River stained red by iron ore, runs into a dam which is now a wildlife refuge for Great Crested Newts.

Brian led a slow amble in a figure of eight around the reserve. As we walked through the wet woodland of willow, oak, elm and ash beside the narrow waterway, Brian was keen to show us the diverse ground flora. Joan thought the bright spikelets of Wood Mellick

looked like ants crawling up the stem. Grasses are often ignored by Wildflower Groups, which is surprising since they provide the main foodstuff for large areas of the world. Pignut, Yellow Archangel, are other indicators of ancient woodland. The yellow tassels of the male and the globe shaped female flowers on plants of Dog's Mercury intrigued. We also discussed heterostyly in Primroses and Cowslips, which can be thrum-eyed or, with a longer style, pin-eyed, the variable height of the stigma increases the chance of successful pollination by insects. Pale yellow Primroses and English Bluebells reminded us of the colours of the Ukrainian Flag. The white stars of Ramsons or Wild Garlic are much loved by foragers but can take over a small nature reserve.

Ferns were at that most attractive stage when they unfurl their fronds like a Bishop's crozier. We had a close look at the shape of the pinnule, on the fern blades to distinguish Broad Buckler Fern, Soft Shield Fern and Male Fern. Opposite-leaved Yellow Saxifrage, the tiny flower with the huge name grew alongside the small stream.

As we crossed the leat we admired close up, the saffron flowers of Mayblobs, (Marsh Marigold) and Fool's Watercress, Reedmace and Yellow Iris were infilling the dam pond which was the only one of an original three dams which still holds water. In a minute of mindfulness the woodland birds wove a beautiful melody, Songthrush, Blackbird, Robin, Wren and Blackcap to be rudely interrupted by the coarse quacks as a pair of mallards busied about the pond.



**LENS at Red River 25 April 2022**

**Left to right: Brian Gough, Roe Langford, Margaret Beresford, Patricia, Nigel Downes, Christine Carrier, John Langford, Joan Breakwell, David Pinney, Stephanie White, Helen Knewstubb, Catherine Harrison, Tony Maggs**

## RED RIVER AND LOSCOE DAM contd - Marion Bryce

For the final reveal, Brian showed us a group of Snake's Head Fritillary which he had discovered under the tree canopy. He thought these had been planted some years ago, but have since naturalised and spread to other parts of the woodland.

After lunch the sun started to shine and out came the butterflies, Orange Tips in a hurry as usual. A Bronze Shield-bug which had appeared out of nowhere, was returned to the scrub. At the end of a former colliery tramway path we came to a huge mirror of water. Listed Mediaeval on Derbyshire Historic Environment Record: 'Loscoe Dam was first mentioned in the Derbyshire Assize Rolls of 1300. The dam was constructed by Richard, Baron Grey of Codnor to power a corn mill and to ensure an adequate supply of fish for Codnor Castle. Although all trace of buildings has gone, the pond, fed by the Bailey Brook, remains, still retained by the mill dam'.



Loscoe Dam  
25 April 2022  
Marion Bryce

### LENS at Loscoe Dam 25 April 2022

Photo Credit Marion Bryce

Around the edge of the dam, as well as the native trees such as Alder and Bird Cherry, alien plants like Yucca and Fatsia had been planted. Shiny blue Alder Beetles were everywhere and we saw the first Alder Fly of the year. As we gazed over the tranquil pond the smooth surface was disturbed as Swans and Ducks swam towards us hopefully. We watched some young boys struggle to land a large carp. The good friends were very knowledgeable on species, the best places to fish and they had all the gear. The well loved fish was rapidly returned to the water.

We were now in a competition to beat Plantnet, a free phone app being tested by David Pinney. PI@ntNet is part of a Citizen Science project that identifies plants simply by photographing them with a smartphone. Very useful when you don't have a botanist on hand or for testing the Botanist's skill to parry the certainty of the purported species with key points. Plantnet had a 100% success rate on the woodland plants in flower, and surprisingly identified Wild Carrot with one photograph of the seedhead it faltered when presented with last year's seedhead of Southern Marsh Orchid. Very absorbing but the game was slowing us down, the wind was cool and we were ready to move on past the green playing fields where Skylarks sang, alongside woods where Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler called, to a friendly farewell.

Marion Bryce 25 April 2022

## LANGFORD LOWFIELDS - Marion Bryce

Mon 9 May 2022 Langford Lowfields RSPB (with Tarmac) Bird Reserve

Meet 10.30am car park under height barrier just off Cottage Lane, postcode NG23 7QL. Morning walk, or stay all day. Possible migrating birds, avocets, bitterns... No facilities on site, but Pearson's Garden Centre ½ mile away. Leader Chris Clay

Chris Clay, led LENS on an enthusiastic and inspirational walk around this new RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) Nature Reserve. He is one of a team of volunteers who regularly patrol the site, count the birds (and the visitor numbers) and carry out active conservation activities.



Chris Clay Volunteer Warden at RSPB Langford Lowfields  
9 May 2022

Photo Credit Marion Bryce

Standing by the entrance site information board we learn't all about Langford Lowfields. It is a partnership project between the RSPB and Lafarge Tarmac, restoring a sand and gravel quarry to what will be the largest reedbed in the East Midlands. Recreating the wildlife rich habitat that once lined this section of the River Trent. Just over 50ha of the site are currently under RSPB management, with most of that being reedbed in the early stages of development, but also including species rich grassland, scrub and broadleaved woodland. This area will expand as the quarry is exhausted. Two circular trails are marked, starting from a small reception hut. In the breeding season paths may be re-routed or closed off. There is also a public footpath that follows the entire site perimeter, a 4.5 mile walk.

We then plunged into a small piece of ancient woodland which was beautiful with blooming bluebells. Hedgehog artwork on a cut bough was admired while another sawn off stump was host to a bright yellow bracket of Chicken of the Woods. Carpets of Spring Beauty with it's perfoliate leaves and white 'Chickweed' flowers were a rare treat for botanists. Out into bright sunshine walking beside a hedgerow frothy with Hedge Parsley we paused at a sand-pit to look across to Phase 3 where the active quarry machinery of Tarmac could be seen in the distance. 'That will be our new visitor centre' Chris told us proudly.

# LANGFORD LOWFIELDS contd

- 2012 Floating Bridge constructed
- 2013 Boardwalk and Pond Dipping Platform constructed
- 2014 360 degree viewing area constructed
- 2016 Bearded Tits breed for the first time
- 2018 Phase 3 restored and huge outfall sluice linking the reserve to the River Trent installed
- 2019 Bitterns breed for the first time
- 2023 Phase 1,2 and 3 land to be transferred to the RSPB
- 2026 Southern extension to be restored?
- 2045 Northern extension to be restored?
- 2070 RSPB Visitor Centre to be opened on the site of Tarmac's Processing Plant?

On the shore of the lagoon, violet flowers of Ground Ivy marked the waterline, together with pink stars of Stork'sbill. Chris told us about the birds on the reserve, he could remember every detail of his first sightings, although it is difficult to impress a group which is based close the wonderful Attenborough Nature Reserve, the Purple Heron would take some beating. Bittern, Bearded Tit and Avocet were recent records and hopes are high that the Marsh Harrier which scouted the site last year will nest in 2022. 28 species of butterfly and 18 species of Odonata have been recorded.

Chris was leading us along a restricted access route in Phase 2, between two lagoons, with pauses as we lifted our binoculars to sweep for birds. The majority of water birds were Greylag Geese with a few Canada Geese, we also saw Pochard and Tufted Duck. The highest part of the reserve is a low mound giving a panoramic view. It was very windy, 'it's always windy here' said Chris, it is so low lying there is nothing to slow down the wind, it is also quite exciting when the River Trent overflows. As we watched a Little Egret probing for food, a huge Grey Heron lifted above the reedbed and two Mute Swans, surely the least aerodynamic of birds, flapped and heaved themselves out of the water and whished overhead.

A lot of hard work has gone into making the reserve attractive to birds. Reeds are grown commercially on site, and planted out locally. Control of scrub is a constant issue. We now headed for the shelter of 'Corfe Castle' an attractive crenellated bird screen and wind-break. Pause.....

Two Oystercatchers screamed to a halt on a small islet. Common Terns wheeled and dived enjoying the stiff breeze. We had the rare sight of Terns actually using the Tern Platforms which are anchored in the lagoons, well away from predatory mammals. 2022 seems to be the year of the St Mark's Fly, a delicacy much appreciated by birds and these may have been the cause of the excited cries and squeals of joy which filled the air as a pair of Hobbies circled closer and closer to us giving an unprecedented display of fly catching.

We were warmly received at the reception hut, which has up to date bird sightings posted, these can also be seen on the site Warden Joe Harris' on-line [blog](#). We had missed the Cuckoo, the Bearded Tits, the booming Bittern, the Marsh Harrier and the Avocets, but it is always good to have something to look forward to.



**Langford Lowfields 9 May 2022**  
Photo Credit Marion Bryce



**LENS at Langford Lowfields 9 May 2022**  
Left to right David Clay, John and Roe Langford, Dr Nigel Downes, Patricia McHale, Gill Martin, Mike Barrett  
Photo Credit Marion Bryce



**Hobby RSPB Langford Lowfields 9 May 2022**  
Photo Credit Marion Bryce

Marion Bryce 16 May 2022



# MERCIA MARINA

Mon May 23 Mercia Marina, Willington

Meet 7pm in marina car park. Turn left towards Willington from A50 at A38 junction and follow brown signs. Post-code DE65 6DW,

Grid ref SK 303 296. See the progress in encouraging wildlife since David first showed us round in 2012.

Leader David Boddy and Ian Douglas



**David Boddy 23 May 2022**  
Photo Credit Marion Bryce

This Marina walk was put together by David Boddy for the LENS visit in May 2012 to show visitors the work carried out by the Operations Team and the Wildlife Group to enhance the wildlife friendly site. In the intervening years the Wildlife Group has waxed, winning many wildlife awards, but then waned, however their hard work is still contributing to the biodiversity of the site.

A Sedum carpet was planted on the roof of Chandlery and walnut trees planted in shrubbery behind Chandlery

Semi-mature trees in South Field screen the power station. Trees from Woodland Trust were planted between the lake and existing planting. The lake has various types of margins including beaches. Otter Holts have been built and a habitat pile constructed.



**Weeping Giant Redwood**  
23 May 2022

Photo Credit Marion Bryce

A row of *Prunus Sargentii* have been planted to give some early colour in front of the zigzag bank.

By the Facilities Pyrus Chanticleer, Block Portugal Laurels and JC Van Tol Hollies have been planted for screening. The leaves provide wax for bees and the holly berries attract black-birds. Some fruit trees have been planted on the island for the benefit of moorers and wildlife.

Weeping Redwoods looking like elderly people, are a feature by the marina.

In front of Cedar Lodge a pair of *Koelreuteria paniculata* (Goldenrain-Tree) have been planted. By Rowan Lodge a patch of grass is not being mown to demonstrate the existing flora. Bluebell Wood has willows, poplars, and alders. A habitat pile has been built.

At the NE corner of the Marina is a wildlife corridor to give access to the grass and existing native planting.

To the North and Northwest of the Marina are fields that are used for grazing and dog walking. This has now been developed as an arboretum. We spent some time there using the large board to identify the trees. There was a mix of native and specimen trees such as Giant Redwood. Horse Chestnut varieties all were infected with Bleeding Canker for which they used Garlic as a salve. All around the edge is unmowed and full of wildflowers.

On top of the bank (with sparse vegetation) along the NW of the marina is the Bee Orchid colony. In season these outer areas support a wide variety of butterflies and moths. The pontoons are populated with dragon and damselflies and give shade to fish. Young fry should be visible in the shallows.

Fruit trees have also been planted on the island by the Facilities' Amenity Block1. The promontories along the west side offer a range of habitats for birds – the most exotic being oystercatchers.

Between the spine road and Findern Lane are native trees and also a hedge to act as a screen. There are a lot of new sculptures to fascinate and amaze.



**LENS at Mercia Marina 23 May 2022**

Photo Credit Marion Bryce

The pond and wildlife garden are well managed and provide a quiet corner to observe dragonflies and wildflowers.

The Wildlife Volunteers have planted up a Butterfly Drift on a sunny bank near the public car parks, but this was not the weather for it. The weather station was still actively recording although there was little need for the helioscope on our visit and finally we were glad to be treated to a nice cup of tea in the Grounds Maintenance staff HQ.

Marion Bryce 23 May 2022

# National Moth Night 2022 - Orchid Wood

Moth Night is the annual celebration of moth recording throughout Britain and Ireland by moth recording enthusiasts. It is organised by Atropos, the moth journal, in collaboration with Butterfly Conservation and the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology. We are encouraged to find and record as many different species as we can. Each year a theme is chosen with one or more target species to look out for and the theme for Moth Night 2022 is woodlands.

This seemed a good chance to let Orchid Wood at Sawley show it's worth. Orchid Wood is a 20 acre wood planted in 1996. It was created from the former Elvaston sand and gravel quarry and was recently (2020) granted Local Nature Reserve status.

Arriving on site it was lovely to see that Southern Marsh Orchids were flowering. But a daytime search for moths proved fruitless, it was such a wet, cold and cloudy day. On a sunny day we would perhaps see Mother Shipton, Burnet Companion, Latticed Heath, Cinnabar or maybe a Burnet Moth at this site.

As the weather forecast was good for the evening we set up our 2 Skinner Moth Traps, and switched on the MV lamps at 21.00hrs. A cold Westerly wind was blowing, the sun was shining but the temperature had dropped to 10C. As dusk deepened we had a wander around the Nature Reserve with the Echometer Mark II Bat Detector which picked up calls of a few Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle Bats and a solitary Noctule.

Inspection of the traps at 22.00hrs showed Green Carpet, Flame Shoulder and Pale Prominent moths in residence, together with about 20 Common Swift Moths. We then had a flurry of Geometers, delicate moths which rest with their wings spread open. Dark Barred Twin-spot Carpet, Seraphim, Sandy Carpet, Common Marbled Carpet, Clouded Silver, Rivulet, Clouded Border and Common Marbled Carpet. These are easy to see as they tend to rest on the acrylic shield of the moth trap rather than going inside. Hiding in the cardboard egg trays were noctuids, White Ermine, Heart and Dart, Setaceous Hebrew Character and Marbled Minor.



**Peach Blossom Orchid Wood 23 May 2022**  
Photo Credit Marion Bryce

We had soaked tea towels in a heady brew of red wine and sugar syrup and draped them over branches, this is known as wine roping, although we hadn't got any rope! A gorgeous Peach Blossom took advantage of our generosity. Otherwise the moths we caught were 'Little Brown Jobs', according to the Natural History Museum the dull colours of nocturnal moths help camouflage them as they rest during the day, in contrast to brightly coloured daytime moths which need to display their distastefulness to predators. A closer look at the LBJs shows fascinating intricate patterning developed over centuries of evolution. This was well illustrated by the sole micromoth recorded, the Yellow-headed Belle, which imitates a bird dropping!



**Cockscomb Prominent Orchid Wood 23 May 2022**  
Photo Credit Marion Bryce

During a hiatus, we had a cup of coffee. It was so quiet at midnight, we decided to pack up. That was when good numbers of moths suddenly flew out of the trees and we didn't know where to look first, mostly they were Rustic Shoulder Knot, Ingrailed Clay and Small Square Spot, but there were also two handsome Prominents, Coxcomb Prominent and Pebble Prominent. We had to laugh when we saw a Poplar Hawk Moth fluttering around the light as the traps were half dismantled! The moths had been slow to start flying and we packed up too early, but altogether we counted 89 moths of 31 species. The most interesting moth was a Barred Rivulet which although widely distributed over England and Wales, is classified as local.



**Barred Rivulet Orchid Wood 23 May 2022**  
Photo Credit Marion Bryce

# National Moth Night 2022 - Orchid Wood

A quick reference to the [Naturespot](#) Site shows that Barred Rivulet is Occasional in Leicestershire and Rutland. L&R Moth Group status = C (very scarce resident or rare migrant). They say if you want to find moths, look for the foodplant and the larvae of the Barred Rivulet feed mainly on the seeds of Red Bartsia which is common in the grassland at Orchid Wood.



**Red Bartsia Orchid Wood 23 May 2022**  
Photo Credit Marion Bryce

The Orange Footman was an interesting record as this is a true woodland species, the larvae live on lichens growing on the trunks of Oak and Beech trees. The Orange Footman is classified as Nationally Local and a quick check on Nature Spot shows there are few records in Leicestershire = D (rare or rarely recorded).



**Orange Footman Orchid Wood 23 May 2022**  
Photo Credit Marion Bryce

We have now recorded 105 moth species at Orchid Wood. There is no doubt that this much loved Erewash Borough Council Local Nature Reserve with its great variety of native plants, shrubs and trees has created a diverse environment for moths to thrive, increasing biodiversity in the locality.

Marion Bryce and Derek Brumbill 22 May 2022



Orchid Wood LNR  
Sawley  
20 May 2022  
Marion Bryce

**Orchid Wood 23 May 2022**  
Photo Credit Marion Bryce

<b>Orchid Wood 20 May 2022 MV light</b>
<u>Apamea sordens</u>
<u>Cabera pusaria</u>
<u>Calliteara pudibunda</u>
<u>Colostygia pectinataria</u>
<u>Diarsia mendica</u>
<u>Diarsia rubi</u>
<u>Dysstroma truncata truncata</u>
<u>Eilema sororcula</u>
<u>Eupithecia abbreviata</u>
<u>Eupithecia tripunctaria</u>
<u>Korscheltellus lupulina</u>
<u>Laothoe populi</u>
<u>Lobophora halterata</u>
<u>Lomaspilis marginata</u>
<u>Lomographa temerata</u>
<u>Notocelia cynosbatella</u>
<u>Notodonta ziczac</u>
<u>Ochropleura plecta</u>
<u>Oligia strigilis</u>
<u>Perizoma affinitata</u>
<u>Perizoma bifaciata</u>
<u>Perizoma bifaciata</u>
<u>Perizoma flavofasciata</u>
<u>Pterostoma palpina</u>
<u>Ptilodon capucina</u>
<u>Rivula sericealis</u>
<u>Thyatira batis</u>
<u>Xanthorhoe ferrugata</u>
<u>Xestia c-nigrum</u>

# Cloud Wood

**Mon June 20 Cloud Wood (LRWT)** Meet 7pm in layby opposite reserve on minor road linking Griffy Dam (B5324) and Tonge (A453), SE of Breedon-on-the-Hill. Nearest postcode DE73 8BG, grid ref SK 417 214. Ancient woodland with rich flora and fauna. Leader Phil Lee



**Phil Lee 20 June 2022**

Photo Credit Marion Bryce

Have you ever been on an orchid hunt? Orchids are among the most beautiful of the wildflower species in the UK. In Britain we have 57 native orchid species, some are common and widespread, while others are sought after rarities found only in a few select places. Orchid seeds are very small – they are spread by insects or by the wind, and they need to land somewhere that has ideal conditions of light, moisture and warmth for germination. Orchids also need to be infected with a mycorrhizal fungus from the soil if they are to survive. Our visit this evening was especially to see the Greater Butterfly Orchids *Platanthera chlorantha* which grow at Cloud Wood.

Cloud Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (33 Ha) is owned and managed by the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust. It is classified as an ancient woodland and is one of the best sites in Leicestershire for flowering plants. More than 220 species of ferns and flowering plants have been recorded. During the Second World War, Cloud Wood was clear-felled and allowed to regenerate naturally, escaping the planting of conifers. In 1993 the site was given to the Trust by Ennstone Breedon plc. The wood was divided into sections and a 5, 10 and 25 year coppice cycle was introduced in part of the wood, in order to maximise biodiversity. Other areas have been allowed to develop naturally into high forest.

Rides and glades are important habitats for wildlife in woodland, providing open areas and edge habitats, great efforts have been made to maintain a scalloped edge to the woodland, discovering new colonies of woodland plants in the process. Numerous nest boxes and mammal boxes have been put up. The rides are carpeted with marjoram and wild basil which produce a lovely aroma when walking through. A particular speciality is Giant Bellflower which flowers later in summer. Birds such as Dunnock, Chiff Chaff, Robin and Willow Warbler sing

Butterflies include Speckled Wood, Peacock, Orange Tip, Silver-washed Fritillary, Purple and also White-letter Hairstreak.

Phil Lee kindly guided us to the goal while telling us about the management of the site, it's history and the speciality species which are a draw for Naturalist's. He has an intimate knowledge of the reserve and pointed out the best elms for White Letter Hairstreaks, the Oaks for Purple Hairstreak, and Silver-washed Fritillary Alley!

On our short walk we saw numerous plants of Broad-leaved Helleborine *Epipactis helleborine* about to flower, Cloud Wood is famous for it's Violet Helleborines *Epipactis purpurata*, but this was not their day. Timorously we squeezed through the dark and green understory to see the curiously symmetrical Herb Paris *Paris quadrifolia*. A shining spherical ovary topped 4 green sepals and 4 narrow petals, above 4 wide leaves set square. We found some aberrant plants with 5 and one with 6 leaves but the overall impression was of a very precise form.



**Herb Paris Cloud Wood 20 June 2022**

Photo Credit Marion Bryce

We were shown a colony of Solomon's Seal *Polygonatum multiflorum*, competing arching stems with pairs of large, dark green, slightly pleated leaves, a visit from the caterpillars of Solomon's Seal sawfly had shredded some of the foliage. Solomon's Seal is often supposed to be an escape from cultivation as could be the case with the *Astrantia Astrantia major*, with it's open star-shaped floral brackets, decorating the woodland ride. Strange, since there are no nearby habitations!

Common Spotted Orchids *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* really are common in Cloud Wood. Spotted leaf rosettes topped with light pink cone shaped flower clusters, each flower scribbled with strange squiggles, sprinkled all along the woodland ride. The volunteers had to count them all, so we know there were at least 900. Three of the orchids were pure white, even the leaves were unpigmented, the O Kelly hybrid which was new to us.

On the old quarry site

At last we came to the great denouement. Phil disappeared from view and then a view haloo! He'd found them. Being very careful not to trample our prize, we ducked under branches and pushed aside briars to peek at the

# Cloud Wood

waxy white flower spikes of the Greater Butterfly Orchid, they almost seemed to glow in the dark.



**Greater Butterfly Orchid**  
**Cloud Wood 20 June 2022**  
Photo Credit Marion Bryce

Phil said there are two colonies at Cloud Wood, one has 6 flower spikes and the other has 26. Phil explained the difference between Lesser and Greater Butterfly Orchid. Both are strongly fragrant at night. Greater is a plant of woods and calcareous soils, while the Lesser is found on open, acidic sites. Taxonomically the best way to distinguish them is by the two pollen sacs (pollinia), which in Lesser Butterfly Orchid *Platanthera bifolia*, are 2 mm long, and parallel. Greater butterfly-orchid is larger, the two pollinia are 3-4 mm long and converge in an inverted 'V' shape. The pollinia adhere to visiting insects and so are transferred to other flowers. We were then privileged to climb the access to the old quarry heap where Bee Orchids *Ophrys apifera* thrive on the precipitous stony edge and there was one Pyramidal Orchid just breaking bud (no perfume detected).

By now it was very late, but Phil hadn't finished. We returned to our cars and Phil led us to the spot on Gelscoe Lane where Lizard Orchids *Himantoglossum hircinum* have established on the sunny roadside verge.



**Bee Orchids Cloud Wood 20 June 2022**  
Photo Credit Marion Bryce

Introduced serendipitously about 10 years ago with road infill the original plant reappears every year and now there is a colony of six plants on the opposite verge. With exquisite timing these rare orchids were flowering, the flowering stems nearly a meter tall. Each individual flower is palest green, with pink spots and stripes, the lower petals and lip form long curly frills that dangle down from a densely packed flower spike which smells of goats! What a tremendous climax to round off our Great LENS Orchid Hunt!



**Lizard Orchid Diseworth 20 June 2022**  
Photo credit Marion Bryce

Marion Bryce 26 July 2022

# Lathkilldale

Mon June 6 Lathkilldale with Jacob's Ladder

Meet 2pm in car park 90m east of Monyash village on B5055 Bakewell to Monyash Road. Rocky and steep paths in parts. Grid ref SK156664 Leader Marion Bryce

Out in Derbyshire's wonderful White Peak, our party walked about 1 km down Lathkill Dale, along pleasant pasture peppered with Meadow Saxifrage, Cowslips and Pignut, alongside low crags of Monsal Dale Limestone (Carboniferous age) on either side. We peered into the Dew Ponds full of Smooth Newts where Broad-leaved Pondweed was flowering.

The first part of the dale consists of a narrow, rocky limestone gorge, eroded by water over eons, very slippery under foot. Cool, dark Tufa waterfalls form gardens of Maidenhair Spleenwort and Brittle-bladder fern tumbling onto Dog lichen covered rocks, Dog's Mercury and Opposite-leaved Yellow Saxifrage. Then flowers, flowers, all the way! Nodding salmon pink Water Avens in abundance, and the Yellow flowered hybrid with Wood Avens.



**Water Avens Lathkilldale 6 June 2022**

Photo credit Marion Bryce



**Lathkilldale 6 June 2022**

Photo credit David Pinney

Large amounts of waste stone were tipped over into Lathkill Dale from Ricklow Quarry making the vast screes which tumble down into the dale, characterised by the largest boulders being at the bottom. An advantage of the poor weather was that many banded snails were gliding on the damp rocks shaded by Sycamore. A closer look revealed the large flat purple brown discs of Lapidary Snails *Helicigona lapicida*



**Lapidary Snail Lathkilldale 6 June 2022**

Photo credit Marion Bryce

These snails have a restricted distribution, a study in Sweden showed that marked snails moved 6m in 2years!



**Mossy Saxifrage Lathkilldale 6 June 2022**

Photo credit Marion Bryce

Mossy Saxifrage (*Saxifraga hypnoides*) topped boulders surrounded by Crosswort, Shining Cranesbill, Rose-root (*Sedum rosea* – long established here), Germander Speedwell, Tall Rockcress and Bird'sfoot Trefoil.

Mandale Lead Mine closed in 1851, having lost a large amount of money. Near the mine entrance is the exit of a sough (tunnel) built to drain the mines. The wall on which the beam of the Cornish-type steam pumping engine was supported is still standing.

Beyond the gorge, there is a panoramic view of the dale as the path leads along fenced off blue patches of Jacob's Ladder, leading to Lathkill Cave.

# Lathkilldale

**Jacob's Ladder** *Polemonium caeruleum*, is the official county flower of Derbyshire as decided in a nationwide poll by PlantLife in 2004. The brilliant blue flowers and prominent orange stamens are unmistakable. The name "Jacob's Ladder" is a Biblical reference to the compound leaf structure, six to twelve narrow stacked leaflets arranged like ladder treads across the midrib.

According to Wilmot and Moyes 2015 Derbyshire Flora, 'Jacob's Ladder is an occasional native perennial of the White Peak where it is one of the most characteristic and showy plants of the Derbyshire Dales. It is often planted in gardens so has a county wide spread. This plant which was once found countrywide is now restricted to Derbyshire's White Peak and the Yorkshire Dales. It illustrated on the cover of the Clapham Flora of Derbyshire (1969) and a plant collected from Bentley Brook was illustrated in the 'Concise British Flora in Colour' Keble Martin (1965)'.



**Jacob's Ladder Lathkilldale 6 June 2022**

Photo credit Marion Bryce

After a scramble downhill we followed a path along Ricklow Dale, where tilted beds of bedded limestone lie banked against the margins of the mudbank which has very fine turf. The dry sunny grassland was full of the



**Early Purple Orchid Lathkilldale 6 June 2022**

Photo credit Marion Bryce

most exquisite flowers, Quaking Grass, Salad Burnet, Fairy Flax, Milkwort, Eyebright, Heath Speedwell, and Early Purple Orchids in profusion. There were also a pair of flat topped, banded Heath Snails *Helicella itala* with the characteristic large trumpet shaped umbilicus.

A stone stile was a challenge and while we waited, we watched a small furry caterpillar climbing on the limestone walls, later identified as a Common Footman moth larva which feeds on lichens. We were just gearing up to clamber a second steep stone stile when someone noticed that the farm gate was open. Like lambs we scampered through to the hay meadows which had been cut and laid in windrows. A baler was out gathering up the dried hay. It was an easy if hazardous walk back to the car park along the main Monyash Road. After refreshment we paused at Monyash Village to admire the two well dressings, the Tree of Knowledge by Monyash School and 'Every Hive Needs a Queen'. Beautifully executed and a very apt celebration of this Platinum Jubilee Year.

Marion Bryce 27 June 2022



**Well Dressing Monyash 6 June 2022**

Photo credit Marion Bryce

# Beeston Sidings

Mon July 25 Beeston Sidings Local Nature Reserve  
Meet 7pm car park near Lakeside Pavilion, East Drive of Nottingham University. Postcode NG7 2RD. The reserve is home to slow worms, white-letter & purple hairstreaks....  
Leader Simon Jenkins

It was a fine evening for our guided walk around Beeston Sidings Local Nature Reserve. We met up with Simon and Danni,



**LENS at Beeston Sidings Nature Reserve  
25 July 2022**

Photo credit Marion Bryce

Nottingham City Council Park Rangers at Highfields Lakeside. Rabbits scattered as we crossed University Boulevard, briefly surveyed Tottle Brook, then accessed the Lilypad Boardwalk which showcases a dry reedbed in the Science Park. With a brief pause to remove a few stray Himalayan Balsam plants, we walked through to the new entrance to Dunkirk Pond and the Beeston Sidings Reserve which has recently been improved with assistance from the European Development Fund.

The pond is a flooded ballast pit originally dug in 1830s to provide material for the railway embankment, now a fishing pond managed by Trent Valley Angling. Purple Loosestrife, Skullcap and Gipsywort flowered around the edge while in the pond, Brandy bottles of Yellow Water Lily thrust their way through leathery lily pads as the delicate Fringed Water Lily flowers closed with the deepening evening light.

We continued over a small bridge to a mature Lime Tree grove where Simon showed us a mummified stalked puffball, this is a good site for fungi in Autumn. Beeston Sidings 5.57 Ha is one of the largest post-industrial sites remaining within the City of Nottingham. Originally a railway marshalling yard, Beeston Sidings was abandoned over 50 years ago and fell into disuse over a period of years. Formally 9 hectares, the site was divided into two sections and 5 hectares was converted into sports field for recreational use. The remainder of the site was left as an informal green space to encourage wildlife to the area, declared a Local Nature Reserve 9 September 2002.

We are at peak harvest, and numerous Gatekeeper Butterflies

busied near the Blackberries as we walked over the Old Sidings. The footpath led beside tangled wildflowers, every type of Evening Primrose, White Campion, Bladder Campion, Marjoram and Bird's-foot Trefoil, many of the plants dehydrated by lack of water and high temperatures and hot winds the previous week. To keep this area of wildflowers, the Park Rangers cut Bracken twice a year to stop it encroaching. Recently they have replaced noisy brush cutters with scythes which will be used to control bramble.

Ann found a maroon and pink Gorse Shieldbug nymph among the twisted seed pods of Broom, while Neil pointed out a gall on the broom, twisted and deformed buds, caused by *Aceria genistae*. This is a Gall Mite, native in Europe, which has been introduced in New Zealand for biological control of Broom.



**Gall of *Aceria genistae* on Broom  
25 July 2022**

Photo credit Marion Bryce

A new wildlife site has been created around the Stuart Adams pedestrian and cycle Bridge which connects the Boots Site with University Boulevard, named after Ibuprofen inventor. It was initially undersown with a breathtaking display of native wildflowers, trees and shrubs have now been planted which will feed and provide cover for wildlife.

The wildlife corridor is maintained alongside Grass Tennis Courts beside woodland, which includes Pedunculate Oak, Wych Elm, Hornbeam, and a long boundary row of mature Lombardy Poplar, marking the edge of the Old Sidings. The old trees sometimes crash down in high winds.

The leaves of a Horse Chestnut were crisped and brown. Simon pointed out that the spider's web below had caught several of the tiny exquisitely patterned moths of the Horse Chestnut Leaf Miner. Christine exclaimed at the swollen stems of Narrow-leaved Hawkweed, an unwitting host to the gall of a Cynipid Wasp *Aulacidea hieracii*.



## Beeston Sidings contd



**Gall of *Aulacidea hieracii* on Broom**

**25 July 2022**

**Photo credit Marion Bryce**

The path narrowed by robustly fenced industrial storage site, corrugated metal sampling mats had been placed alongside the Voles, but more especially Slow-worms. We were now walking alongside an embankment where arching stems of bramble cover large rubble piles and custom built hibernacula. This is the site where Slow-worms were re-located from Victoria Station in the 1970s when it was demolished to build the Victoria Centre in Nottingham City centre. Of course, we had to check underneath the mats, the most exciting find was a Common Shrew which probably enjoys eating the snails which congregate under the mats, it quickly disappeared into the undergrowth. We then headed east to a large clearing where, behind



**Twiggy Mullein at Beeston Sidings Nature Reserve**

**25 July 2022**

**Photo credit Marion Bryce**

some old concrete railway sleepers Simon showed us Twiggy Mullein *Verbascum virgatum*, which none of us had seen before. The walk led back through shady woodland among the huge buttress roots of the old Poplars, back along the colonnade of Atlas Cedar, across the Boulevard and back alongside Highfields Lake to the car park.

Thanks to Simon and Danni for their hard work maintaining biodiversity and for leading an informed and interesting walk around the Beeston Sidings Nature Reserve.

## Shardlow Heritage Walk

**Mon July 11 Shardlow Heritage Trail Meet at Shardlow Clock Warehouse Derby DE72 2GL Leader Joan Breakwell**



**LENS at Shardlow**

**11 July 2022**

**Photo credit Marion Bryce**

The ancient settlement of Shardlow nestles at a natural crossing point of the River Trent and was recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086. The opening in 1777 of the country's first long-distance canal the 93 mile Trent and Mersey launched the development of Shardlow as an inland port.

James Brindley of Derby (1716-1772) was commissioned by Josiah Wedgwood among other industrialists to build the Trent and Mersey Canal to transport delicate pottery, clay and flint, also coal and iron, between the east and west coasts by way of the two rivers. Brindley's pioneering techniques minimised the amount of earth moving by developing the principle of contouring and used a circuitous route that avoided embankments, and tunnels. He devised the first canal locks with a single upper gate and double mitre lower gates and developed the use of puddling clay to produce a watertight canal lining. He designed a national canal network although he did not live to see it completed.

With Shardlow Heritage Trust Village Trail in hand we walked past the Heritage Centre to the Trent and Mersey Canal. There was a good view across the canal, back to the Clock Warehouse which was originally F.E.Stevens Corn Mill No.2 and dates from 1780. The segmental arch which spanned an arm of the canal has been converted into a decorative feature with part of an old barge projecting.



**Shardlow**

**11 July 2022**

**Photo credit Marion Bryce**

# Shardlow Heritage Walk

Passing the old Salt Warehouse we ducked under the Idle Bridge where casual workers would wait for work loading and unloading the boats. After so many years of weathering it is difficult to decipher the advertising letters on the FE Stephens Warehouse although we should know them by heart! Corn, Fertiliser, Flour, Meal. On the towpath an old crane was used to hoist crates into Zachary Smith's bottling store, the old brewery has gone. A little further on is the first cast iron milepost painted in traditional black and white.



**Crane and Milepost Shardlow**

**11 July 2022**

**Photo credit Marion Bryce**

It was a warm evening so we had a leisurely stroll, getting out the tick sheet. Even though the grass had been mowed on the canal bank the slope down to the water had escaped the cut. Many of the 92 plants recorded were plants of the waterside, Yellow Iris, Reed Sweetgrass, Jewelweed, Water Figwort, Hemlock, Hemlock Water Dropwort and Marsh Woundwort. There was also a good variety of trees although the Wych Elm and Ash will have abbreviated lives. Colourful damselflies had settled in the reeds, we spotted an Olive Sedge.. We recalled a report of an alligator in the canal, which turned out to be a realistic replica under the packet bus wharf. The most interesting find was a significant colony of large silvery grey thistles with broad spiny wings along most of their length and a few long spiny leaves, and huge cobwebbed purple flower heads. Cotton Thistle is a non-native plant often considered to be a garden escape which has now naturalised in this area.



**Cotton Thistle, Common Wasps pollinate Water Figwort, Jewelweed and Olive Sedge, Shardlow**

**11 July 2022**

**Photo credit Marion Bryce**

Shardlow is a vibrant centre for leisure boating with several popular marinas nearby. We watched a narrow boat purr quietly towards Derwent Mouth, seeing the ancient lock mechanism be employed is an education in itself. First the boat moors, the lock is checked, if it is empty, push the huge balance beams to open the heavy gate, steer the boat in and close the gates, attach a windlass and wind up the paddles to let water in. When the lock is full, open the top gate, close the paddles and the carefully steer the boat out, shut the gate and then moor the boat to collect the crew. Wave to the observers –books could be written on the division of labour at locks!

Working our way along the village trail passing colourful gardens with pots of Geraniums and Fuchsias, some old industrial buildings were identifiable, the Stables, the Smithy, the Dockyard, Nursery Workers Cottages, Canal Workers Cottages, Boat Builders and Old Brewery Warehouses, sympathetically converted into private residences, the old working village remembered in the house names, One old warehouse remains untouched with crumbling old red brick and sunburst windows.



**Old Warehouse Shardlow**

**11 July 2022**

**Photo credit Marion Bryce**

Shardlow is a very popular place to live and a centre for tourism on the inland waterways system, at it's heart, a magnificent Village Hall and green built by the Dickinsons, Nurserymen in the 1890s.

There are numerous old pub buildings, the Navigation Inn, Canal Tavern, Ship Inn, we used to say that Shardlow had got more pubs then houses! London Wharf was busy with the New Inn (the oldest pub built 1770) and the Malt Shovel, facing each other over the water, bursting with customers. We were tempted but remembered we had to 'pay' for parking at the Clock Warehouse.

Marion Bryce 11 July 2022

# The Erewash Valley Wildlife Corridor

Mon August 15 The Erewash Valley Wildlife Corridor Meet Greenwood Centre 8 Chester Grn, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 6LN. Leader Marion Bryce.

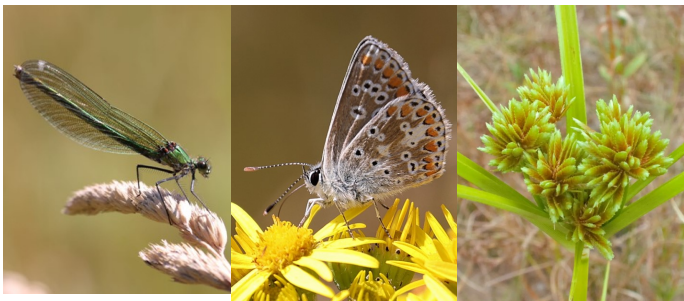


**LENS at Toton Fields LNR  
15 August 2022**

Photo credit Marion Bryce

We planned to go to Toton Sidings today but as the weather has been hot and dry for a sustained period, all of the wildflowers have withered and we did not think we would see too much of interest. Instead we followed a loop through three interlinking wildlife sites in the River Erewash Wildlife Corridor: Toton Fields, Toton Washlands and a short section of the Erewash Canal. At only 30m above sea level, these 'wet flood meadows with wet carr woodlands have naturally high groundwater incorporating old river meanders.

The butterfly bank at Toton Fields is overgrown with bramble, but we were delighted to record Common Blue, Brown Argus and Small Copper butterflies in the wildflower meadow and this year we saw Devils-bit Scabious flowering for the first time. A Painted-tail Wasp and a good selection of hoverflies were feeding on the Angelica, Banded Demoiselle and Migrant Hawker dragonflies busied about in the air while Lesser Marsh Grasshopper, Field Grasshopper and Long-winged Coneheads stayed low in the grass. Speckled Wood and Red Admiral butterflies flew in the dappled shade of the trees.



**Banded Demoiselle female, Brown Argus  
and Pale Galingale  
15 August 2022**

Great Spearwort, Orange Foxtail and Marsh Cudweed, and New Zealand Pigmy Weed, Soft Rush and Jointed Rush, and Pale Galingale grew in the dry pond hollows. There were various recollections of the old rhyme 'Sedges have edges. Rushes are round. Grasses are hollow. What have you found?'

We continued our walk past the entrance to Toton Sidings, along a tarmacked path between tall grey paling fences, over the railway via the green pedestrian bridge, to where the path leads to a wonderful sculpture 'Wild Weeds Birch' which was commissioned by Sustrans in 2001.



**Wild Weeds Birch  
15 August 2022**

Photo credit Marion Bryce

This is one of a series depicting plants that grow along the edges of the Nutbrook Trail which runs from Long Eaton to Heanor, and forms cycle route 67. Inscribed on the base is a poem by Janet Devereux: 'Come all you people / Pause awhile / And I will tell you a story / a story of this enduring valley of ours / of factories and flowers and furniture / of lace, bobbins, planes and pencils / of mines, railroads and canals / of water and willows / where kingfishers and herons dive / Where quiet flows the EREWASH.

We love to look at the River Erewash from the bridge, every time, before walking through the Environment Agency Nature Reserve and flood sink at Toton Washlands. It is 5 years since we saw any Water Voles here although they are still being reported from the nearby Erewash Canal, we blame the Mink which has also been seen. A Kingfisher screamed along the river out of view,

## Erewash Valley Wildlife Corridor contd



**River Erewash at Toton  
Washlands 15 August 2022**  
Photo credit Marion Bryce

Moorhen, Mallard, Grey Wagtail, Grey Heron and Little Egret are regular visitors here but do not nest successfully. We all picked the juicy purple blackberries, although we appreciate the fruit, you can have too much of a good thing. LENS records butterflies at Toton Washlands each summer and the Environment Agency kindly mow us a path through the Bramble, but a lot of the wildflowers have been overwhelmed and the old meanders are overgrown. We saw Tufted Vetch, Meadow Cranesbill, Common Toadflax, and Upright Hedge Parsley among the thorns and noted that the pink helmets of Himalayan Balsam were increasing. Colourful cascades of bright pink double roses trail up to tree height, Dorothy Perkins is described as a 'very vigorous rambling rose in the Plant Catalogues, Brenda Meakin has told me she always carries secateurs when it is her turn to record the butterflies. The Environment Agency have plans to re-profile the flood-bund, dig out the meanders, remove some trees and restore some of the biodiversity on this site next year.

We walked back along the Erewash Canal accompanied by a family of Mute Swans. Fringed Water Lily massed at Dockholm Lock, waxy flowers of Yellow Water-lily and the exotic, multi-petalled White Water-lily pushed through flat green floating leaves and an increasing layer of Great Duckweed. Although the path has been widened and the towpath tamed for the busy cycle route, the bank extensions which were fitted by the Canal and River Trust with LENS in 2014, have lasted well, providing homes for Water Voles and many other animals. A brilliant display of flowers included Jewel Weed or Orange Balsam. Purple Loosestrife, Great Willowherb, Water Figwort, Skullcap, Gipsywort, Marsh Woundwort, Hemp Agrimony and the last of the Meadow Sweet. Orange trumpets of Montbretia have appeared. We could see no sign of the Field Garlic alongside the hedge, this nationally rare wildflower is normally abundant along this stretch of the towpath, but all the flowers had been destroyed by the heat. Fortunately it has found a niche directly on the canal bank and is still present as recorded in WR Linton's 1903 Flora of Derbyshire 'on the canal path between Sandiacre and Long Eaton'.

Marion Bryce 15 August 2022

## Aphids

Aphids are a very successful family of insects, which evolved 280 million years ago in the Permian period. 5000 species have been described. They are plant sucking bugs, often host specific, they have many predators and are the basis for many food chains. Common names include greenfly and blackfly. Most aphids have a pair of cornicles (siphunculi), abdominal tubes on the hind of the abdomen, through which they exude wax. A typical life cycle involves flightless females giving live birth to female nymphs—who may also be already pregnant, an adaptation scientists call telescoping generations—without the involvement of males so they multiply quickly. Winged females may develop later in the season when food is short, allowing the insects to colonize new plants. In temperate regions, a phase of sexual reproduction occurs in the autumn, so the insects overwinter as eggs. Aphids ingest sugary sap out of the host plant xylem. Oligosaccharides are then excreted through as sugary honeydew, Plant sap lacks essential amino acids and aphids rely on bacterial endosymbionts, to recycle glutamate, into essential amino acids.



**Giant Black Spruce  
Aphid 18 July 2022**  
Photo credit Marion Bryce

Why the sudden interest in aphids you might ask? As Roger Umpelby has pointed out, aphids very rarely get a mention except when something 'big' is reported. Today I was walking by the Golden Brook in Long Eaton and stopped to look at a stand of Creeping Thistle. When I saw a GIANT aphid! Mark Fordyce identified it as a Giant Black Spruce Aphid *Cinara piceae*. This huge aphid is jet black and has been described as "resembling the texture and shape of old droplets of tar".

It forms large colonies in spring on the underside of older branches and on trunks of Spruce (*Picea* sp) where it feeds on the stems, branches and trunk in dense colonies producing copious quantities of honeydew. The aphid colony disappears by the end of the summer and the trees show no long-term ill-effects, except for the sooty mould blackened bark and needles.

20 Marion Bryce 18 July 2022

# WELCOME SLUGS AND SNAILS

The RHS produce a top 10 list of pests every year and slugs and snails are always top of the list. Starting this year the RHS to no longer class slugs and snails as pests. Recognising the role that gardens have in supporting biodiversity there will be greater consideration of and focus on the role that slugs, aphids and caterpillars play in a balanced garden ecosystem along with more popular wildlife such as birds, hedgehogs and frogs.

Only nine of the 44 recognised species of slug in the UK eat garden plants, Slugs are nature's recyclers, clearing dead matter from the garden, and are also important food for more beloved garden guests including hedgehogs and birds.

If slugs and snails are causing problems with your plants, the RHS has provided some environment friendly methods to control them.

Slugs love a young, vulnerable seedling, so protect transplanted seedlings with cloches.

Slugs and snails get rid of dead and decaying matter, helping turn waste into compost. So why not go out with a torch on a mild evening while the weather is damp, move your slugs to the compost heap.

Why not dig a pond to encourage frogs, which will do slug elimination for you? .



**Garden Slug *Arion hortensis***

Photo credit Marion Bryce

## TOAD RESCUE

Mike and Susie Gent of Derbyshire Amphibian and Reptile Group organised this year's Toad Patrol at Church Wilne. The season started all of a sudden on March 28th when 86 toads, frogs and one common newt were rescued. A rota was organized and Marion Bryce and Joan Breakwell of LENS took part.

Very dry weather, cold evenings and nights have badly affected amphibian migration. With global warming we would expect earlier migration, but in Derbyshire the figures show that migra-

tion is taking place later in the year.

The official patrol for 2022 ended on May 10. Despite attending Toad Patrol every Monday for a month, there was only one evening when migration took place in any significant numbers. Overall total: 318 toads rescued. The results were sent to the Derbyshire and Reptile Amphibian Group for their records.

If you wish to take part in next year's toad patrol contact

[Derbyshirearg.toads@gmail.com](mailto:Derbyshirearg.toads@gmail.com)



**Marion Bryce on Toad Patrol  
11 April 2022**

Photo credit Joan Breakwell

## DRAGONFLY NEWS

Marion Farrell of Groundwork organised a Dragonfly Day at Lount Nature Reserve and was so kind to invite LENS members. There we met the Leicestershire Dragonfly Recorder Ian Merrill with the trustees of [Nature Spot](#) whose website incorporates photographic galleries of over 4,300 species reported from Leicestershire. Nature Spot authenticates and maps records and is an invaluable source of reference.

We recorded 8 dragonfly species, the most interesting being the Willow Emerald which was only identified by emergence holes. This dragonfly lays its eggs in overhanging willow branches and has now moved into our area.

Ian's [Status of Dragonflies in Leics](#) 2022 Report notes Beautiful Demoiselle

and Scarce Chaser on the River Soar.

There has been continued range expansion of the Willow Emerald, Small Red-eyed Damselfly, and Hairy Dragonfly. Lesser Emperor is now a regular migrant. Keeled Skimmer is sporadically recorded.

Black Darter is receding due to drying of moorland.

There are no recent records for Yellow-winged Darter and Red-veined Darter.

Potential Future Colonists: Southern Migrant Hawker, Green-eyed Hawker. Send Leics Dragonfly Records to Ian at [i.merrill@btopenworld.com](mailto:i.merrill@btopenworld.com)



National Forest Dragonfly Day  
New Lount  
24 July 2022  
Marion Bryce

**Willow Emerald emergence holes**

Photo credit Marion Bryce

**LENS Long Eaton Natural History Society**

**LENS Wildlife Talks 2022-23**

<b>28 September</b>	<b>Ken Balkow</b>	<b>Wildflowers of Derbyshire</b>
<b>26 October</b>	<b>AGM</b>	<b>Members Presentations and Displays</b>
<b>23 November</b>	<b>Jack Perks</b>	<b>Pond Scum</b>
<b>14 December</b>	<b>Fay Blackburn</b>	<b>Christmas Quiz and Social</b>
<b>26 Jan 2023</b>	<b>Tim Sexton</b>	<b>The Life of the Willow</b>
<b>22 Feb 2023</b>	<b>Kate Lemon</b>	<b>Local DWT Nature Reserves</b>
<b>22 March 2023</b>	<b>Nick Brown</b>	<b>Swift Awareness</b>

Meetings start at 7.00 pm in the United Reformed Church, 26 Midland Street, Long Eaton, NG10 1HQ. Free parking is across the road in the Town Hall Car Park.

Full disabled access.

Cost £1.50 for members, £2.50 for visitors. All welcome.

Committee Meeting 9 Jan 2023 at 7.00 pm

Agenda items invited.



**Bee Orchid Tesco  
Aphid 19 May 2022**

Photo credit Marion Bryce

Jenny Severn was delighted to see this Bee Orchid growing in the grass verge near Tesco, despite her best efforts to protect it the contract mowers took it down (twice).



Dave Budworth Hon Sec Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Entomological Society (D&NES) died on 12th February 2022 age 76.

Dave was a great champion for entomology, as County Moth recorder his legacy includes a considerable number of new and inspired entomologists.

Dave was also supporter of British Trust for Ornithology activities, having been the Regional Representative for Derbyshire since 1993.

## Membership Renewal Form

I would like to be a member of LENS Wildlife Group

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Tel no \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose a cheque 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.

Please return completed form to the Hon Treasurer, Roe Langford 136 Breedon Street, Long Eaton

**LENS is affiliated to the North-west Naturalists Union and the British Naturalist's Association and a member of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust.**

**Send Photos and articles to Marion Bryce (Editor)**

**Long Eaton Natural History Society Wildlife Group LENS**

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