

BRITISH NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION
Hertfordshire Branch

BULLETIN No.133

(Aug 2015 – March 2016)



Members at Ermine Street, near Hoddesdon, Boxing Day 2015

Photo: Andrew Harris





Foray at Panshanger Park on 4th October 2015
Photo: Andrew Harris



Searching for Lichens at Tring Park on 10th January 2016
Photo: Andrew Harris

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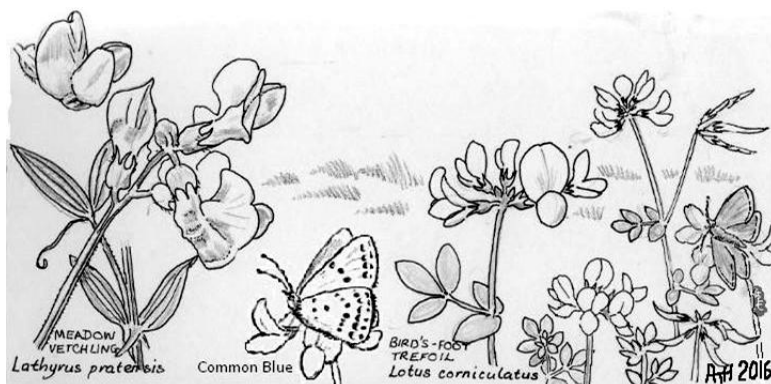
BULLETIN 133

August 2015 – March 2016

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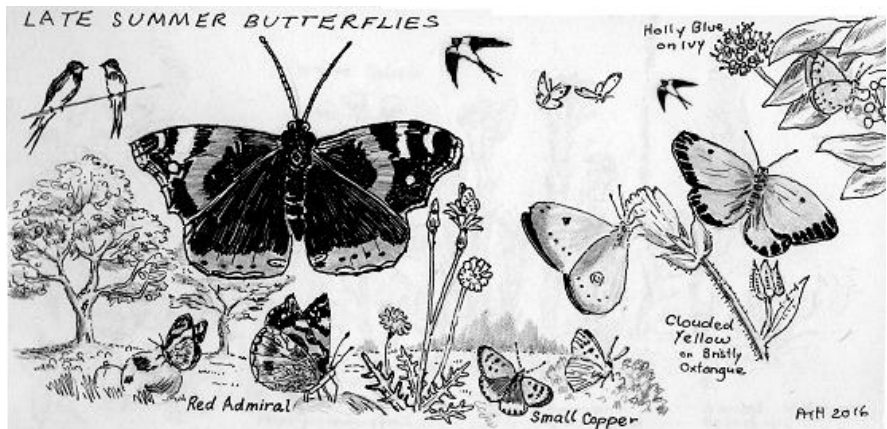




After a poor start there seems to have been more butterflies around just recently: Marbled Whites in large numbers in grassy meadows and I have had my first ever sighting of Clouded Yellow in the garden. But now the grass is parched with a hot and dry August and Red Admirals are coming for windfall apples.

The accounts of field meeting begin at a similar time last year with a hot day in late August following the lower course of the Ver valley, the party welcoming the cool shade by the river and late butterflies and flowers including Devil's-bit Scabious at Telegraph Hill when Graeme Smith made a welcome return to Hertfordshire to kindly lead a walk for us. The reports in the bulletin are testament to a vibrant branch with a packed programme of walks every fortnight so thank you to all who have made this possible as well as to Trevor and Chris James and Diana Furley who have work behind the scenes to help me pull the bulletin together.

While the Ver Valley seemed to have been quite a theme, as usual, field meeting covered various parts of the county and beyond with interesting records such as Short-eared Owls at Panshanger and various beetles which remain a mystery to me – I have enough problems with lichens!



 2015 

THE LOWER VER AND COLNE VALLEYS

8 members, one visitor

Many insects were drawn to the flowers of Wild Angelica. The riverbank vegetation also included Great Horsetail and Water Figwort.

The second part of day entailed a loop northwards, following the river through willow carr and disused gravel workings in the vicinity of Frogmore. However, before that, the path was like a tunnel through a Blackthorn thicket. In this grove we encountered many well formed lichens, including fine examples of *Parmotrema perlatum* and *Hypogymnia physodes*. This part completed, we needed to cross a footbridge spanning the noisy M25. The footbridge and a concrete mounting block beyond it had less obvious but equally varied crustose lichen species. William Bishop found a viviparous Sweet Vernal-grass. There was a welcome breeze now, making the heat more endurable.

Descending into willow carr and past several gravel pits, Hemlock Water-dropwort *Oenanthe crocata* was recorded, again by William, at the edge of the flooded pits. These bodies of water were frequented by Red-eyed Damselfly and the strongly flying Brown Hawker glided over them.

A nice piece of grassland had developed on disused gravel workings, mainly of fine-leaved species, Red Fescue and Bents. There were impressive swathes of Bird's-foot Trefoil and many plants of Carline Thistles and

Common Centaury. Also forming part of the sward were the lichens *Cladonia furcata*, *Cladonia rangiformis*, *Peltigera hymenina*.

William found this incredibly long bramble shoot:



We arrived back at the cars after a good day in spite of the heat.

Andrew Harris

Birds: Coot, Kingfisher, Robin, Blackcap, Chiffchaff, Goldcrest, Great Tit, Nuthatch, Wren.

Odonata: Common Hawker, Brown Hawker, Red-eyed Damselfly.

Butterflies: Small White, Large White, Green-veined White, Holly Blue, Peacock, Speckled Wood.

True bugs (Joe Gray): *Corizus hyoscyami*, *Orthops campestris*, *Deraeocoris ruber*, *Anthocoris nemorum*, *Dicyphus epilobii*, *Plagiognathus arbustorum*, *Nabis limbatus*, *Acanthosoma haemmarhoidale*, and *Palomena prasina*.



FOWLMERE RSPB RESERVE

Saturday 5th September

3 members

Well, we know the weather forecast was a bit 'off', and Fowlmere is (just) in Cambridgeshire, but we were a bit disappointed that only Catherine Patrick joined us round this quite fascinating outpost of the Fens. Never mind – we stuck to our plans and explored various corners of the site, even bits I suspect we were not supposed to be in - always the best way to find things, in our experience!.

We made a route round the north-east side first, then down to the southern end, returning via the southern and western side. We also made a detour to the middle of the reserve to look over it from the main tower hide, as well as visiting the smaller ones by the eastern spring pools and near the car park. Habitats range from reed beds through willow carr to calcareous grassland, rush pasture and ruderal ground. Water bodies have been extended over the years for the birds and are also rich in both flora and invertebrates.

The best bird sightings during the day were Red Kite (as ever these days), Buzzard (ditto), a Hobby passing through, 5 Teal, a Water Rail (good, if brief views), two Kingfishers and numerous Reed Warblers. A Tawny Owl called as

well. It was quite late for flora, but we came across a plant of Brookweed *Samolus valerandi*, which is not at all common in this area. A swamp pool by the reed beds held a fine growth of the typical Fen Pondweed *Potamogeton coloratus*, which has long been extinct at Ashwell, its only known historic site in Hertfordshire. Other usual fenland plants, such as Hemp Agrimony *Eupatorium cannabinum*, Wild Angelica *Angelica sylvestris*, Water Chickweed *Myosoton aquaticum*, Marsh Woundwort *Stachys palustris*, Grey Club-rush *Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani* and Common Fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica* were conspicuous. By the entrance track there was a fine clump of Tansy *Tanacetum vulgare*, looking fairly convincingly wild; while a ruderal patch on the site held Vervain *Verbena officinalis* in flower. The calcareous grassland patches sported Chalk Knapweed *Centaurea debeauxii* and Harebells *Campanula rotundifolia* among other plants; while damper grassland had very clear true Common Knapweed *Centaurea nigra*.

It was not perfect weather for insects, but we did find Migrant Hawker, Southern Hawker, Brown Hawker and Common Darter dragonflies, along with Blue-tailed Damselflies. We desisted from studying beetles in any detail, but could not help noticing the striking, red-coloured fenland speciality *Anthocomus rufus*, which is numerous here. Finally, one of us eventually got good views of a number of Fallow Deer that were skulking in the carr woodland. For a while we had hoped they were Roe Deer, which are known to occur in the area, but no luck!

Birds: Grey Heron, Mallard, Teal, Red Kite, Buzzard, Kestrel, Hobby, Coot, Moorhen, Water Rail, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Wood Pigeon, Tawny Owl, Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Kingfisher, Swallow, House Martin, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Robin, Blackcap, Reed Warbler, Chiffchaff, Goldcrest, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Wren, Dunnock, Treecreeper, Carrion Crow, Rook, Jackdaw, Magpie, Jay, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Linnet, Bullfinch.

Mammals: Fallow Deer, Mole (hills), Rabbit, Badger (sett).



Chris & Trevor James

TELEGRAPH HILL

20th September 2015

6 members

We met at Church Lane, Great Offley, and proceeded northwards over the A505. Near West End Farm we saw both species of Oxtongue growing together, namely Prickly and the taller and more slender Hawkweed Oxtongue. Sadly the scientific name of Prickly Oxtongue has changed from *Picris* to *Helminthotheca echioides*. We passed a pond in a field, which sported a few Mallard and close by we found the lichen *Physcia adscendens*.

We continued down the lane then took the field path to the south of Clouds Hill Wood. We emerged to find splendid views of the rolling countryside towards Luton, with a thick hedge at our right loaded with crab apples and sloes. Trevor said that the flora in this area was not as good as you might expect; one of the best earlier records locally was Giant Bellflower from the nearby Clouds Hill Wood. Along the track we found a few plants of Chicory in flower as well as some Goat's-beard.

We were soon treated to close views of a pristine Red Kite, which was quartering a ploughed field, although it did not seem to find any food. At one point the Kite flew over our heads, then moved towards Clouds Hill Wood, where it was mobbed by a Sparrowhawk. A Kestrel also put in a brief appearance. In the next field along, a farmer was ploughing and was accompanied by about 250 gulls, mostly Black-headed Gulls, but including two or three Herring Gulls and a Lesser Black-backed Gull. A Skylark was seen and some Welshed Thistle.

Moving west, we entered Lilley Hoo Woods, where we saw a Grey Squirrel and Male and Lady Ferns. We also saw the woodland moss *Atrichum undulatum* and a puffball *Scleroderma citrinum*. Trevor demonstrated his acute hearing, magicking up birds whose calls most of us could not hear or identify [mainly Goldcrests, which luckily I can still hear! T.J.]. We noted a Hornet and in the fields one Small White butterfly. Pheasant, Buzzard and three Meadow Pipits were added to the bird list.

Towards Telegraph Hill there was Red Bartsia growing along the path and in amongst a maize crop were plants of Many-seeded Goosefoot and a strange

reddish hairy grass [this turned out to be Millet *Panicum miliaceum*. The Amaranth nearby was more interesting – *Amaranthus albus*, which is not that frequent T.J.]. On Creeping Thistles we were rewarded with the sight of Comma and Small Tortoiseshell butterflies.

I have always enjoyed visits to Telegraph Hill's chalk grassland but was appalled at how rank some of the area had been allowed to become. Flora we saw included Great Brome *Anisantha diandra*, Black Bindweed, Horseshoe Vetch, Common Rockrose, Common Agrimony, Hoary Ragwort, Common Eyebright, Harebell, Mignonette, Yellow-wort, Fairy Flax, Small Scabious and Burnet Saxifrage. We noted Speckled Wood and Peacock butterflies and heard a Nuthatch.

We lunched on a better patch of chalk grassland and Trevor was inundated with beetle records, including 24-spot Ladybird. Trevor told us that the Dormouse had been discovered at Telegraph Hill and now Hazel trees are being allowed to grow up on the site much to the detriment of everything else. A clump of Devil's-bit Scabious was adorned with two flighty Comma butterflies. We heard a Song Thrush.

Trevor suggested we visit Hoo Bit nearby, a recently opened up clearing. This was alive with insects and flowers. There was lots of Common Eyebright and Rockrose and some Milkwort *Polygala vulgaris*. Brimstone butterflies were everywhere and the mosses *Rhytidiadelphus triquetrus*, *Calliergonella cuspidata*, *Dicranoweisia cirrata* and *Ctenidium molluscum* were seen. Some of the bushes held the liverwort *Porella platyphylla*. There were some Speckled Bush Crickets and Field Scabious. White Helleborine had gone to seed. By a track Trevor pointed out Heath False-brome *Brachypodium pinnatum* (formerly confused with Tor-grass) [a new locality for this. T.J.].

We walked to Deacon Hill, where we saw Clustered Bellflower and quite a lot of Woolly Thistle. We were surprised to see so many stands of Common Hound's-tongue. We saw a Yellow Wagtail and Meadow Pipits flying through.

We took the track back via New Welbury, noting Stinking Iris and an old Field Elm *Ulmus minor* en route. There was also Dogwood, Ploughman's Spikenard and Wild Basil. Trevor disappeared into the undergrowth and found the site of the huge calcrete boulder visited by us many years ago. The site was now

overgrown with Elder. There was no sign of the moss *Encalypta vulgaris*, its only site in Hertfordshire. But there was much *Homalothecium sericeum*, *Plagiomnium undulatum* and *Hypnum*.



On Deacon Hill in the Pegsdon Hills
Photo: Paula Shipway

[We would specially like to thank Graeme for having come all the way back from Dorset to take us on this walk round familiar places. As he saw, much has changed since he left our area! Thanks, Graeme. T.J.]

RECORDS (with extra bird records added in – T.J.)

West End Farm, Great Offley:

Flora: Bristly Oxtongue, Hawkweed Oxtongue.

Birds: Mallard, Moorhen, Wood Pigeon, House Martin, Robin, Chiffchaff, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Dunnock, Starling, Meadow Pipit, Jackdaw, Chaffinch, Siskin.

Lichen: *Physcia adscendens*.

Path near to Clouds Hill Wood:

Flora: Crab Apples, Blackthorn, Chichory, Goat's-beard, Welled Thistle.

Birds: Red Kite, Sparrowhawk, Kestrel, Herring Gulls (2 or 3), Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Black-headed Gulls, Green Woodpecker, Skylark, Wren, Rooks, Magpie, Bullfinch.

Lilley Hoo (Mazebeard Spring etc.):

Mammal: Grey Squirrel.

Flora: Male fern, Lady Fern.

Moss: *Atrichum undulatum*.

Fungi: Puffball *Scleroderma citrinum*.

Insects: Hornet, Small White Butterfly.

Birds: Pheasant, Buzzard, Goldcrests, 3 Meadow Pipits, Jay, Greenfinch, Linnets.

Fields by Telegraph Hill:

Flora: Red Bartsia, Many-seeded Goosefoot, Creeping Thistle

Insects: Comma, Small Tortoiseshell.

Telegraph Hill:

Flora: Great Brome, Black Bindweed, Horseshoe Vetch, Common Rockrose, Common Agrimony, Hoary Ragwort, Common Eyebright, Mignonette, Yellowwort, Fairy Flax, Small Scabious, Devil's-bit Scabious, Burnet Saxifrage.

Insects: Speckled Wood, Peacock butterfly, 24-Spot Ladybird, Commas.

Birds: Red Kite (different bird), Buzzard, Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Common Gull (1), Nuthatch, Blue Tits, Long-tailed Tits, Goldfinch, Siskins.



Hoo Bit:

Flora: Common Eyebright, Rockrose, Common Milkwort, Field Scabious, White Helleborine (over), Heath False-brome.

Insects: Brimstone, Speckled Bush Cricket.

Bryophytes: *Rhytidiadelphus triquetrus*, *Calliergonella cuspidata*, *Dicranoweisia cirrata*, *Ctenidium molluscum*, *Plagiomnium undulatum*.
Porella platyphylla.

Birds: Song Thrush, Great Tits, Siskins (again), Goldfinch.

Deacon Hill:

Flora: Clustered Bellflower, Woolly Thistle, Common Hound's-Tongue.

Birds: Yellow Wagtail, Meadow Pipits (10+).

New Wellbury:

Flora: Stinking Iris, Wych Elm, Dogwood, Ploughman's Spikenard, Wild Basil.

Mosses: *Homalothecium sericeum*, *Plagiomnium undulatum*.

Birds: Buzzard (same as before?), Blackbird, Coal Tit

Near Birkitt Hill:

Flora: Nettle-leaved Bellflower, Common Toadflax, Wild Asparagus, Field Sow-thistle.

Insects: Small Heath butterfly.

Birds: Collared Dove, Jay.

At village:

Birds: Grey Wagtail (flying),
House Sparrows (Andrew Harris).



PANSHANGER PARK FOR FUNGI

Sunday 4th October

10 members (a.m.) + 1 visitor

This was supposed to have been an expert fungus foray, led by Kerry Robinson, but she had some problems, so I took over at the last minute. Not being a mycologist, and not having been able to get Chris along either, we had to make do with what could be recognised by a rank outsider!

As a group, we have not often re-visited much of Panshanger since it was at least partly opened up to the public. Gone are the days of it being a peaceful haven, away from the bustle of Welwyn Garden City on the one hand and Hertford on the other. Now it seemed as if pretty well half the population of both places was in attendance, with their dogs!

To have a chance of seeing fungi without the undue attention of other folk, we sneaked away from the car park in the direction of the less-frequented Blakemore Wood, on the gravel plateau near the Sele Farm housing estate. Despite the dry ground and warm weather, it was surprising just how many fungi we found. The tall Shaggy Parasol *Macrolepiota rhacodes* was everywhere, as were various *Russula* species, some of which we dared to name *R. ochroleuca* and *cyanoxantha*, although the latter in particular I know are tricky. The strange lumpy shape of *Hypoxylon multiforme* was found and we came across a glutinous *Oudemansiella mucida* on Hornbeam (usually it is on Beech). Beefsteak Fungus *Fistulina hepatica* was in evidence on some of the old Pedunculate Oak trees here and the woodland floor had numerous Amethyst Deceivers *Laccaria amethystea*. The scurvy-looking shapes of Rollrim *Paxillus involutus* were examined, and also the rather disgusting-looking Ugly Milkcap *Lactarius turpis*. Then, at one point we came across a fine bolete, which, on being sliced in half, turned immediately bright blue! We were able eventually to get a name on this – the Inkstain Bolete *Boletus pulverulentus*. False Death-caps *Amanita citrina* were also found and a rather fine growth of the fan-like brackets of Hen-of-the-Woods *Grifola frondosa*. Dead branches on the woodland floor showed the obvious blue-green staining of the Green Elfcup *Chlorociboria aeruginascens*, but without its ‘cups’.



Boletus pulverulentus at Blakemore Wood.

Photo: Trevor James.

All the while we were diligently following the advertised objective of the day, William Bishop, Simon Knott and Joe Gray were steadily ignoring our efforts and ‘doing bugs’, with the result that William sprang on me a fistful of glass tubes with miscellaneous beetles in them as we left the wood! Seeing that we had run out of decent woodland (Lady Hughes Wood being a bit unproductive), and not feeling capable of naming many obscure *Mycena* species etc., we changed tack. That was also the point at which half the party decided they had had a good enough time and left us anyway! So, a rump of entomologists spent much of the rest of the afternoon hunting for insects (and the odd plant) instead.

We started off around the edge of Lady Hughes Wood, where there is a fine, scrubby gravel bank adjoining the secondary rough grassland of the Park itself. Lunch was had on the edge of the latter, while we also spent some time grubbing about on the bank. Luckily not too many people took that much notice of these strange antics. A few plants were of interest, notably a strange *Solanum* that turned out to be Leafy-fruited Nightshade *Solanum sarachoides*, which has not been found in the County since 1976, to my knowledge (and then only ever at one site – the former Blackbridge tip, Wheathampstead). There was also quite a lot of Common Stork’s-bill

Erodium cicutarium, Nodding Thistle *Carduus nutans*, Vervain *Verbena officinalis*, some Henbane *Hyoscyamus niger* (for which this is the main site in the County) and a few plants of Hound's-tongue *Cynoglossum officinale* (a supposedly nationally scarce plant for which this is a new site locally). Small Copper butterfly was found (nice to see these days), along with Red Admirals and a minute ground beetle – *Microlestes minutulus* – that is, 'extremely minute minute Lestes beetle'! A flea beetle swept by Joe Gray looked like *Longitarsus dorsalis* (with obvious orange stripes down each side of its wing cases), until I got it home and found it had yellow legs, not black ones! So, it needed further examination (later confirmed just as a newly-emerged specimen, so its legs had not darkened). There were also large numbers of all three forms of the Harlequin Ladybird *Harmonia axyridis* in flight everywhere, and which kept landing on us. However, we did find a solitary Two-spot Ladybird *Adalia bipunctata*, which is reckoned to be being gradually out-competed by the Harlequin, so that was good news.

We made our way slowly to the north side of the Park, by the old Welwyn Road, where there are the remains of Evergreen Wood (mostly excavated for gravel during the last 15 years). There is also a scruffy belt of rather derelict Beech trees. This area turned up a number of things, including some nice plants of Bugloss *Anchusa arvensis* (not common with us) and some so-called Common Cudweed *Filago vulgaris* (also not common). Larch Ladybirds *Aphidecta oblitterata* were beaten from conifers. On fallen branches and trunks of some of the Beeches, we found a fine growth of the Oyster Fungus *Pleurotus ostreatus*, as well as nearby the sinister-looking Death-cap *Amanita phalloides* and a few red *Russula* species, which were later identified as the Beechwood Sickener *R. nobilis* (formerly *mairei*). We also came across some interesting Tenebrionid beetles, which were identified as *Nalassus laevioctostriatus*, of which there have been few Hertfordshire records, and a weird-looking Auchenorhynchine bug turned out to be an instar of the rather scarce tree-hopper *Ledra aurita*, also with few Hertfordshire records. No doubt Joe also had other bugs, but I have no note of these.

It was quite late when we finally retraced our steps to the car park, having only scratched the surface of this richly strange locality. Meanwhile the dog-walkers had thinned out and there were fewer noisy kids rushing about. No doubt they, as well as us, had had a good day! I hope Kerry is pleased with our amateur efforts. Any out-of-date names I apologise for in advance!

Birds (yes, we DID record some of these as well): Dabchick (heard on the lake below us), Mallard, Buzzard, Sparrowhawk, Kestrel, Coot, Moorhen, Water Rail (also heard very clearly!), Black-headed Gulls (c.100 around a pond on the plateau), Wood Pigeon, Green Woodpecker, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Nuthatch, Carrion Crow, Jackdaw, Jay, Chaffinch, Linnets, Siskin (flying).

Mammals: Grey Squirrel, Common Shrew (Chambers Plantation), Rabbit.

Amphibian: Common Toad.

Butterflies: Small Copper, Small White, Red Admiral, Speckled Wood.

Dragonflies etc.: Migrant Hawker, Common Darter.

Tree-hopper: *Ledra aurita*.

Beetles (selected more important finds only): *Platyderus depressus* (ground beetle at Blakemore Wood – not common), *Ocypus brunnipes* (large rove beetle, Blakemore Wood), *Quedius scintillans* (local rove beetle, Blakemore Wood), *Quedius microps* (scarce rove beetle, Blakemore Wood – only currently known Herts. site, recorded at Panshanger previously in the 1950s), *Sericoderus brevicornis* (microscopic beetles, found at Lady Hughes Wood, third known Herts. locality), *Microlestes minutulus* (by Lady Hughes Wood), *Aphidecta oblitterata* (Larch Ladybird, by Evergreen Wood remnant), *Nalassus laevioctostriatus* (in beech log, by Welwyn Road belt – few known Herts. localities).

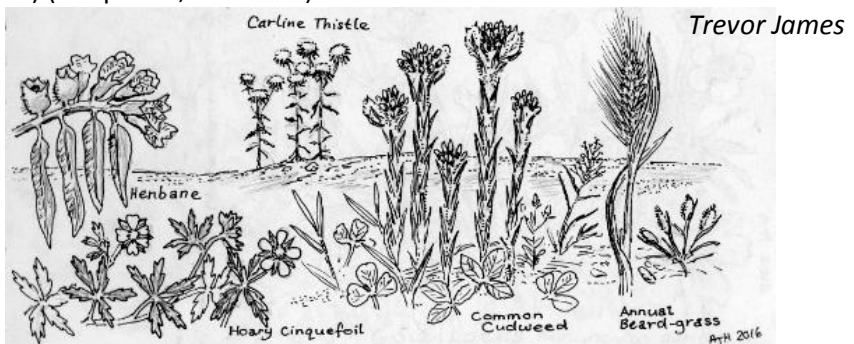
Plants (a few only noted of special interest):

1. By Lady Hughes Wood. Common Stork's-bill *Erodium cicutarium*, Henbane *Hyoscyamus niger*, Nodding Thistle *Carduus nutans*, Vervain *Verbena officinalis*, Musk Mallow *Malva moschata*, Hound's-tongue *Cynoglossum officinale* (a good find here), Aaron's Rod *Verbascum thapsus*, Dark Mullein *Verbascum nigrum*, Leafy-fruited Nightshade *Solanum sarachoides* (first record in Herts. since 1976).

2. By Evergreen Wood remnant. Bugloss *Anchusa arvensis*, Prickly Sedge *Carex muricata*, Common Cudweed *Filago vulgaris*, Annual Beard-grass *Polypogon monspeliensis* (found near here a year or so ago by Andrew Harris, and a rare plant with us, on gravels), Common Centaury *Centaureum*

erythraea, Carline Thistle *Carlina vulgaris*, 'South Herts. White Hystrican Bramble' *Rubus 'verulamii'* (in fact, I am being naughty here, because this is an as yet un-named microspecies of bramble that happens to occur quite widely in south-east Herts. It is abundant at this site and in places like Hatfield Park and Northaw Great Wood, although pretty-well nowhere else, and no one will formally describe it for me!).

Fungi (Blakemore Wood unless otherwise stated) (with help in id. for some later by Chris James): *Agaricus* sp. (by Lady Hughes Wood), *Amanita citrina* (False Death-cap), *Amanita phalloides* (Death-cap)(Welwyn Road Belt), *Armillaria mellea* (Honey Fungus)(Chambers Plantation), *Boletus pulverulentus*, *Chlorosplenium aeruginascens*, *Clitocybe nebularis* (Clouded Agaric), *Collybia butyracea*, *Collybia erythropus* (Chambers Plantation), *Collybia fusipes* (Spindle-shank), *Daedalopsis confragosa* (Blushing Bracket), *Fistulina hepatica* (Beefsteak Fungus), *Ganoderma adspersum* (Welwyn Road Belt), *Grifola frondosa*, *Hymenochaete rubiginosa*, *Hypoxylon multifforme*, *Hypholoma fasciculare* (Sulphur-tuft), *Laccaria amethystina* (Amethyst Deceiver), *Laccaria laccata* (Deceiver), *Lactarius turpis*, *Lycoperdon perlatum*, *Lycoperdon pratense* (Lady Hughes Wood), *Macrolepiota procera* (Parasol Mushroom)(Evergreen Wood remnant), *Macrolepiota rhacodes* (Shaggy Parasol), *Marasmius androsaceus* (Horsehair Fungus), *Marasmius oreades* (Fairy-ring Champignon) (field by Lady Hughes Wood), *Mycena arcangeliana*, *Mycena crocata*, *Mycena galericulata* (Common Bonnet), *Mycena inclinata*, *Mycena rosea*, *Oudemansiella mucida* (Porcelain Fungus), *Paxillus involutus*, *Pleurotus ostreatus* (Welwyn Road Belt), *Russula aeruginea*, *Russula cyanoxantha*, *Russula nobilis* (Welwyn Road Belt), *Russula ochroleuca*, *Stereum hirsutum* (Chambers Plantation), *Xerocomus porosporus* (Welwyn Road Belt) (39 species, + 1 indet.).



GORHAMBURY and the VER VALLEY

Saturday 17th October

4 members, 1 visitor

Once in a while a BNA meeting does not go to plan. This was one of those occasions. Unfortunately this meeting was programmed to take place on the same day as the Hertfordshire Natural History Society's AGM and our Chairman Trevor was going to be presented with the Society's 1875 Award, so we were a little worried that nobody would be able to join us (In the future we will have to ensure that there is no clash!).

Our small but enthusiastic group of four members and one visitor met in the museum car park and after our first sighting of two Red Kites we set off to walk along the drive that leads to Gorhambury House. We did not get very far when we were brought to an abrupt halt by the kiosk lady collecting money from the public visiting the remains of the Roman Theatre of Verulamium. She rapped on the window and told us that the permissive path was closed. Apparently there was to be a shoot.

After a quick look at a map we decided to explore the Batchwood Hall area instead. We paused just long enough to note one lichen, *Caloplaca flavescent*, growing on the decorative post at the entrance to Gorhambury before walking along the verge of the A4147. There were Mole hills almost hidden by the long grasses and these have now been recorded for the HNHS Mammal Survey. A coastal plant, Buck's-horn Plantain *Plantago coronopus*, which thrives in salty areas, was abundant on the verge close to the road and Black Horehound *Ballota nigra* was noted growing at the bottom of the hedgerow.

After some difficulty negotiating the traffic along the Hemel Hempstead Road we entered the lane towards Batchwood Hall. An agricultural field had attracted a flock of approximately 30 mainly male Chaffinches foraging on the ground. This flock could have been an autumn influx from northern and eastern Europe. A Magpie and several Wood Pigeons were also seen. Common Mallow *Malva sylvestris* was still in flower by the track and as we joined the footpath that leads to Childwick Green we noted Wood Melick *Melica uniflora*, long past its flowering time but still easily recognisable. Another distinctive plant after the flowering period was Greater Stitchwort

Stellaria holostea. A fungus was spotted and identified as a *Boleteus* but without an expert in the group we could not name the species. We stood still and admired the landscape, but all agreed that the area was sadly lacking in birds.

A few common lichens were seen, including *Xanthoria parietina*, *Physcia adscendens*, *P. tenella*, *Parmelia sulcata* and the large distinctive yellow-grey patches of *Flavoparmelia caperata*. Although common, these species are surprisingly beautiful when looked at through a hand lens, when their distinguishing features can be seen more easily.

The general consensus was that we would all be happy to finish the meeting early, so we turned back and added a few more birds to the list: Black-headed Gull, Green Woodpecker, Blackbird, Robin, Blue Tit, Dunnock, Wren, Carrion Crow, Goldfinch, and a noisy flock of Long-tailed Tits. We also noted a decorative strand of Black Bryony *Tamus communis* with its shiny red berries in a hedge and concluded that a possible crab apple tree was a domestic apple as there were hairs on the underside of the leaves.

Despite the lack of any particularly exciting and notable wildlife we all enjoyed our walk in the ordinary Hertfordshire countryside.

Merle Gwyn and Paula Shipway

HIGH SCRUBS WOOD

Saturday 31st October

4 members

This meeting was programmed to be a day for recording mammals and led by Mike Demidecki. Unfortunately Mike was called away due to a family crisis so I stepped in to lead a general meeting in the area.

Three members joined me at the designated parking spot, where a noisy flock of Long-tailed tits was flitting from tree to tree. We set off north along the main by-way, which follows an ancient and very wide track through the wood. We soon spotted a Mole hill and I noted a couple of lichens that had fallen from tree branches, *Hypogymnia physodes* and a well passed its best specimen of *Parmelia saxatilis*. We paused to examine galls on a Beech leaf and learned that the cylindrical growths were caused by the gall midge

Hartigiola annulipes. With the help of hand lenses we could see that some of the growths were covered in pale coloured hairs.

We were surprised by the quantity of a common fungus, White Saddle *Helvella crispa*, growing along the sides of the track and we were all curious about the possible reasons for its choice of habitat. A few specimens of Elfín Saddle *Helvella lacunosa* were also noted and Candle-snuff *Xylaria hypoxylon*, growing on a tree stump. A little further along the track I noted a pin lichen, *Chaenotheca ferruginea* on the trunk of an oak tree. Just before we turned right off the main track to take the path that leads to the north eastern corner of the wood we stopped to look at a curiosity: an acorn cup dominated by a Knopper Gall *Andricus quercuscalicis* along with a spiny gall produced by *Andricus grossulariae*. After taking the right turn we found a beautiful specimen of Horn-of-Plenty *Craterellus cornucopioides*.

The dextrous use of a sweep net across a clump of stinging nettles produced two beautifully marked bugs, *Liocoris tripustulatus* and *Gastrodes abietum*. With more general sweeping a Stilt Bug *Metatropis rufescens*, with wonderful stripy legs, was captured and admired before being released. The preferred habitat for this bug is Enchanter's Nightshade and as expected a few plants were found.

We examined a fallen tree and pondered about a possible slime mould, or was it perhaps a fungus? The most likely outcome was a slime mould *Ceratiomyxa fruticulosa*, but there is no certainty. I was pleased to see and identify a lichen, *Jamesiella anastomosans*, on its preferred habitat of shaded damp horizontal wood, the only evidence being an apparent green stain with very small (0.1 mm) projections or hyphophores with semi-translucent tips.

William found a foul smelling snail-eating beetle called *Silpha atrata* and more successful sweeps with the net produced an Eyed Ladybird from a gorse bush and a Cream-spot Ladybird from a bramble. As we approached the edge of the wood we spotted two large beetles which were photographed from various angles to help with identification. Our esteemed Hertfordshire beetle recorder later confirmed that these were Dor Beetles *Geotrupes stercorarius* and were considered to be a good find as there have not been many records during the last ten years. A very common fungus, Amethyst

Deceiver *Laccaria amethystea*, often found growing below Beech trees, was making an appearance in amongst the autumnal carpet of leaves.

We crossed the lane then paused to eat our lunch on a bank. A little way along Grim's Ditch a pristine Comma butterfly rested on the trunk of a Beech tree in a shaft of bright sunshine. As we made our way along the footpath towards Wigginton we paused to look at a fallen twig with a particularly fine specimen of the lichen *Hypogymnia tubulosa* and Joe showed us a bug, *Stenodema calcarata*, which is distinguished from other species by the existence of two spines on its back legs.

A member of the Myrid bug family, *Pantilius tunicatus*, was examined then released and the bitter tasting lichen *Pertusaria amara* was sampled by one brave (or foolish) member of our group. A White-legged Snake Millipede *Tachypodoiulus niger* was admired, a species that is identified not only by the colour of its legs but by a slightly turned up point at its back end.

We had our first and only sighting of a mammal for the day, a Grey Squirrel and we then stopped to watch a small flock of Starlings and a larger flock of mainly Stock Doves. As predicted a Gorse hedge was home to numerous Gorse Shieldbugs sunning themselves in the warmth of the November sunshine but despite the promise of the reward of banana chips for the finder we failed to find a Spiked Shieldbug in the area.

We crossed a couple of fields and I made a note of the lichen *Ramalina fastigiata* growing in a hedgerow, before making our way through Roundhill Wood and back towards our cars. One last record for the day was the Holly Speckle Fungus *Trochila ilicina*. With the end of daylight hours approaching there was no time left for a short extension to the loop but there will always be another day.

Birds seen or heard: Buzzard, Pheasant, Black-headed Gull, Green Woodpecker, Wood Pigeon, Stock Dove, Robin, Great Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Wren, Nuthatch, Starling, Carrion Crow, Jackdaw, Magpie, Jay.

Mammals: Grey Squirrel, Mole (hills).

Paula Shipway

DANESBURY LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

Saturday 14th November

4 members

It had been ten years since I had the chance to look at the lichens at Danemead, so this walk offered a chance to return to see how things had changed since then and to get a better list of this group for the LNR. I had expected the lichen flora to not be especially good owing to the exposed position of the site. As it turned out it exceeded expectations and the walk offered some intriguing glimpses into the complex ecology of these curious dual organisms. A decade ago the lichens on a veteran Ash tree had been particularly spectacular, with 20 different species. I looked at this briefly the Thursday before the walk, expecting the interest to have declined and though one of the boughs has collapsed and it looked as though a fire had been lit in the hollow centre, I was delighted to find that the lichens were still good and the number, some 25 taxa, a slight increase from when I last looked.

The actual day of the walk dawned with ominous dark clouds and a dire weather forecast. Three hardy (or foolhardy) souls – Paula Shipway, William Bishop and Jean Williamson - joined me and we headed first to the east side of the reserve – the Fernery field. We came across another good tree – an oak on the west side of the Fernery. It had such things as *Platismatia glauca* and *Usnea subfloridana*. Both started colonising in the wake of the decline in atmospheric sulphur dioxide when the bark was acidified but have suffered with the general eutrophication (nutrient enrichment) of the environment, so it was good to see them surviving here.

The artificial rock face and grotto did not have much, due to the shade, but recent clearing may lead to a more diverse encrustation. We did however have an excellent view of three Bank Voles gnawing at the bark on some collapsed ivy. This was the prelude to what turned out to be a Bank Vole day, William was looking at some logs and discovered five more, including two young, then one popped up when he was looking at one of the fallen trees, so we saw at least nine. I wondered whether they would be more active in rainy weather as the wet might make it harder for the raptors.

We regretted not having a mycologist among us for there a number of interesting waxcaps among the grassland. [At least 7 species of waxcaps have been recorded at Danesbury – CJ] We progressed to the Park Field, passing fences where there was a good covering of *Lecanora saligna*. This attractive lichen bears numerous 'jam tart' fruits with chestnut centres contained within cream-buff margins.

Despite the predictions the morning had stayed largely dry, but after lunch the rain started and was falling steadily by the time we had reached the veteran Ash. It was fortunate I had had a good look beforehand at its lichens. Now we had the briefest of tours of the old tree and with everything becoming increasingly wet a longer walk was abandoned as we dissolved away.

Andrew Harris

Lichens: Sixty-two species were recorded, including examples of *Physcia aipolia* and *Ramalina fastigiata* on the hawthorn bushes of Fernery field. On the oak tree three species which are in decline due to nutrient enrichment of the environment: *Parmelia saxatilis*, *Platismatia glauca* and *Usnea subfloridana*. The trunk of a Sycamore tree had *Opegrapha viridipruinosa* (classed as Nationally Scarce but only described as a species in 2011).

Vascular plants: In flower: Lesser Stitchwort, Meadow Buttercup, Yarrow. Others seen: Agrimony, Meadow Vetchling, Common Sorrel, Bulbous Buttercup and Crested Dog's-tail. Also many dried heads of Woolly Thistle.

Thank you to William Bishop for the following records:

Birds: Red Kite, Mallard, Pheasant, Black-headed Gull, Wood Pigeon, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Redwing, Blackbird, Robin, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Nuthatch, Carrion Crow, Jackdaw, Magpie, Jay, Chaffinch, Goldfinch.

Other fauna: 9 Bank Voles, 1 Grey Squirrel (putting us one species up on the mammal walk!), Violet Ground Beetle.

Other plants: Italian Lords & Ladies *Arum italicum* (in leaf).

VER VALLEY

Saturday 28th November

3 members, 7 visitors



Photo: Joe Gray

This meeting took the form of a linear walk between How Wood and St Albans Abbey train stations, following the course of the River Ver as much as rights of way, and some frisky cattle, would allow. It was run as part of the inaugural Sustainable St Albans Week, and the advertising for this initiative attracted a half-dozen first-timers to the meeting. The seventh visitor was Romita, the leader's wife, who, despite having attended more through coercion than choice, ended up really enjoying the day. She might just become a regular. None of the visitors was allowed to leave without having been given a membership leaflet!

The meeting started under clear skies at St Albans Abbey station, where we boarded the train towards Watford Junction (the conductor was in a jovial mood and let one of the members off who was five pence short on the fare). Five minutes later we disembarked in How Wood, and the group was quickly scanning Frogmore Ponds for birdlife. A member of the public had already alerted us to a Goosander on one of the ponds, and we managed to sight this bird along with a Great Crested Grebe, a Shoveler, and other waterfowl.

Clouds were beginning to build as we left Frogmore Ponds and headed towards Park Street, and a cold breeze was limiting the length of time for which we could comfortably stop and stand around. Nevertheless, we braved a five-minute pause by a Common Hawthorn in Ver Valley Meadows, with hand lenses out, to examine several lichens, as well as some low-hanging Mistletoe. Being mature individuals, and in the name of objective naturalism, we ignored the seasonal tradition associated with being under the latter.



Mistletoe: Joe Gray

As we stood by that hawthorn, a group of two-dozen walkers – Ramblers, perhaps – strode past us purposefully, with eyes focused on just the ground immediately in front of them. By the time we had finished with the hand-lenses, that group was out of sight, at least half a mile away – thus illustrating a point made by the leader to the visitors at the start of the meeting: we are different from a walking group. Several sets of chattering teeth served as a cue to move on.

Above the meadows, a solitary Buzzard and a pair of Red Kites enabled us to discuss the importance of tail-shape in identifying raptors, while on the ground in the distance a Little Egret prompted a debate on the rapidly changing ranges of birds.

At 11.45 we stopped on a bridge over the Ver, following a suggestion that it might be time to take on some hot fluid. Before the leader could unscrew the top from this flask, lunch boxes were out and the contents being tucked into. (Question for the Editor: is there a record for earliest lunch on a meeting?)

As several people chomped their way through sandwiches, the leader took the opportunity to get out his sweep net and managed to shake a small Mirid bug off ivy. (He was darned if he'd be leading a meeting without finding at least one of these insects.) At home, he identified this as *Pinalitus cervinus*.

The early diners were on their feet again by noon, and those who had worn wellies may have felt slightly smug now as the only path to a necessary river crossing took the group through eight inches of mud (created by the repeated hoof-traffic of cattle crossing the Ver at this point). The speed advantage afforded by gumboots was bad news for the walking-boot-wearers; the latter, picking their way more carefully through the mud, missed the lone kingfisher of the day.

Our route continued past the Sopwell House hotel and into St Albans. Following a quick loop round the Watercress Wildlife Association local nature reserve, and with the forecast rain having now set in, most people departed. But determination to take the bird list past the half-century mark saw William, Romita, and the leader press onwards and complete the planned lap of Verulamium Park's ornamental lake. Happily, it was nice weather for

Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Mute Swans, Pochards, and Greylag Geese; and a pair of cormorants brought our meeting total to fifty-three bird species.

The finish of the walk took us past a Christmas tree vendor. William and the leader briefly debated the possibility of thoroughly beating the spruces, but they thought better of it. It might have made for some bare branches and disappointed children in the homes of St Albans on Christmas day – and, possibly, the more immediate involvement of the police.

Birds: Cormorant, Great Crested Grebe, Grey Heron, Little Egret, Mute Swan, Greylag Goose, hybrid Canada x Greylag Goose, Canada Goose, Mallard, Gadwall, Shoveler, Pochard, Tufted Duck, Goosander, Buzzard, Red Kite, Kestrel, Coot, Moorhen, Lapwing, Herring Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Black-headed Gull, Wood Pigeon, Feral Pigeon, Collared Dove, Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Kingfisher, Mistle Thrush, Redwing, Fieldfare, Blackbird, Robin, Goldcrest, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Dunnock, Wren, Carrion Crow, Rook, Jackdaw, Magpie, Jay, Grey Wagtail, Pied Wagtail, Starling, Chaffinch, Goldfinch, Siskin, Linnet, Lesser Redpoll, House Sparrow,

Mammals: Grey Squirrel, Rabbit.

Bugs: *Pinalitus cervinus*

Joe Gray



HEARTWOOD FOREST

Sunday 13th December 2015

7 members, 1 visitor



Wellies and Puddles

On our way to the site the weather deteriorated and we thought perhaps no one would turn up, but BNA members are a sturdy lot and a good group appeared, so we were not able to go straight back home to a warm house!

From the car park we walked up through the areas of new planting, with verges of the footpath seeded with some unusual species for the area including Austrian Chamomile, Corn Cockle and Corn Marigold. Heading north-east towards Pudlers Wood, a bank was seeded with Oil-seed Rape and Chamomile, both still in flower and possibly providing birds with seed. There were good views of a Yellowhammer along the way.

Continuing towards Round Wood the tree planting gave way to natural regeneration, with good populations of Ox-eye Daisy, Ladies Bedstraw and Red Campion. The first of the ancient woodlands we entered was Round Wood, which was mostly Hornbeam, last coppiced in the 1980s. Amongst the understorey we spotted an ancient coppiced Hazel which had a central dead branch with many woodpecker holes and some interesting lichens. Nearby we found extensive growth of a bracket fungus growing in tiers, which proved to be Smoky Bracket Fungus *Bjerkandera adusta*, common to dead and moribund wood of broad-leaved trees. The ground flora contained some good clumps of ferns, including *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *D. borrieri* and *D. dilatata*, with early bluebell leaves emerging and *Rubus subinermoides* (one of Trevor's favourite blackberries! [also *R. vestitus* and *R. rufescens* here, both widespread – T.J.]).

We then walked down along the edge of Round Wood where there were a number of groups of grey coral-fungus, *Clavulina cinerea*.

The highlight of the walk between Round Wood and Pudlers Wood was the sighting of 2 Short-eared Owls quartering the ground on the slope just above us. These winter visiting owls are unusual in that they hunt during the day - definitely to our advantage.

In Pudler's Wood, with its many coppiced Hornbeams, were some that were probably some 1000 years old, with characteristic remaining ring coppice formations. Amongst them were many fungi, including *Rhodotus palmatus* (Wrinkled Peach) and *Laccaria amethystea* (Amethyst Deceiver). At the base of many Hornbeams we were puzzled by a mass of froth, seemingly created by the rain dripping off the trunk, possibly containing resins.

Continuing through Well Wood, with a network of old banks, including a wide linear hollow way, possibly a disused old road, we walked through Pismire Spring and emerged onto the bridleway leading to Langley Wood. Planted

young oak trees bordered both sides, forming a formal avenue of trees. As the mist descended we arrived at Langley Wood, with its beautiful stands of coppiced Limes. Finally we arrived back at the car park, having enjoyed an interesting walk despite the weather!

Lichens (with thanks to Paula Shipway): *Opegrapha ochrocheila*, *Evernia prunastri*, *Physcia tenella* (on Hawthorn) *Arthonia radiata*.

Birds (with thanks to William Bishop and Trevor James): Kestrel, Herring Gull, Black-headed Gull, Wood Pigeon, Short-eared Owl, Green Woodpecker, Skylark, Mistle Thrush, Fieldfare, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Redwing, Robin, Goldcrest, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Marsh Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Nuthatch, Treecreeper, Wren, Dunnock, Carrion Crow, Magpie, Jay, Jackdaw, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Linnet, Lesser Redpoll, Yellowhammer, Reed Bunting.

Mammals (records: Trevor James): Grey Squirrel (many), Muntjac (slots), Rabbit, Badger (sett at Round Wood).

Fungi noted (with extra records: Trevor James, William Bishop): *Auricularia auricula-judae*, *Bjerkandera adusta*, *Clavulina cinerea*, *Coriolus versicolor*, *Daldinia concentrica*, *Ganoderma adspersum*, *Hypholoma fasciculare*, *Laccaria amethystea*, *Laccaria laccata*, *Laetiporus sulphureus*, *Rhodotus palmatus*, *Stereum hirsutum*, *Tremella mesenterica*, *Xylaria hypoxylon*.

Spider (record: Simon Knott): *Diaea dorsata* (Pudler's Wood).

Beetles (records: Trevor James): *Calathus fuscipes*, *Carabus violaceus*, *Cartodere nodifer*, *Coccinella septempunctata*, *Diaperis boleti* (nationally scarce, in fungus by Well Wood), *Eledona agricola* (nationally notable, with *Diaperis*), *Leptusa ruficollis*, *Nebria brevicollis*.

Molluscs (records from Pismire Spring: Trevor James): *Discus rotundatus*, *Ena obscura*, *Nesovitrea hammonis*.

Ruth Graham and Jean Williamson

BOXING DAY WALK – HODDESDONPARK WOOD

Sunday 26th December 2015

11 members



Our 'traditional' Boxing Day walk this year was back in the Broxbourne Woods area. At June Crew's suggestion, given that our vague idea of going to the now defunct pub at Goose Green was obviously a non-starter for lunch, we met at the Lucerne ('Lucy') Warren car park in Cock Lane, on the edge of Hoddesdon and walked in from the east towards Hoddesdon Lodge. The path followed the side of the A10 motorway for a while – noisy but not uninteresting - and

then we entered the wood from its south-east corner over a rough barricade, which tested the agility of some of us! The route then took us along the shaded margin of the Spital Brook to where it is crossed by Ermine Street, returning by way of the Roman Road towards the north and then back through the wood and down the footpath we started on.

The noteworthy thing about the meeting was probably the temperature. It was positively warm, if dull, windy and cloudy. Mid-afternoon temperatures were as much as 16°C! Needless to say, this sort of weather in mid-winter plays all sorts of havoc with wildlife, and so it was no surprise to find all manner of plants in flower that ought to have been asleep: Red Campion, Blackthorn, Gorse (well, that is supposed to flower all year anyway, perhaps!), Common Speedwell, Red Dead-nettle, Common Daisy, Herb Robert, Hogweed (!) and Alexanders (one plant by the Lord Street/A10 bridge). Down by the Spital Brook, we also came across some Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage (not yet in flower) and fine plants of Soft Shield-fern *Polystichum setiferum*, but no sign these days of the stands of Wood Club-rush *Scirpus sylvaticus* that used to be here, the last locality in the County.

The birds were a bit sparse, but we did see a couple of flocks of Fieldfares (50 or so), and there were regular parties of Redwings flying over, calling (80-100+). The usual Buzzard was circling, and we also had both Green and Great Spotted Woodpeckers, two Treecreepers, a single Nuthatch, and a couple of Mistle Thrushes in fields. The odd thing was the scarcity of Wood Pigeons –

only two all day! Perhaps the best animal sighting was made by Tom and Janet Gladwin, tail-end charlies at the end, who were lucky enough to spot an active Slow-worm by the A10!! Paula Shipway and Andrew Harris were excused for studying lichens, especially on the gnarled old pollard Hornbeams down Ermine Street, by Highfield Wood, where Andrew reported finding one tree (not very big), covered in ancient woodland indicators, including: *Enterographa crassa*, *Graphis scripta*, *Opegrapha vermicellifera* and in particular the specially notable *Pertusaria leioplaca*. They also recorded some good things on the known heathy bank by the A10 near Hoddesdon Lodge, including *Peltigera hymeniferum* and *Cladonia* spp. Andrew remarked to me that these old trees at Ermine Street have probably had these communities on them since before the Industrial Revolution!

After our plod round, we were very pleased to be refreshed with mountains of food at June Crew's home in Broxbourne, just down the road – many thanks for your kind hospitality, June.

Trevor and Chris James

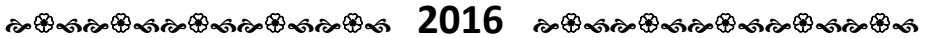
Birds (with extra notes by Tom Gladwin): Buzzard, Pheasant, Black-headed Gull, Wood Pigeon, Tawny Owl (T.G.), Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Mistle Thrush, Fieldfare, Redwing, Blackbird, Robin, Goldcrest, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Nuthatch, Treecreeper, Wren, Dunnock, Carrion Crow, Jackdaw, Magpie, Jay, Grey Wagtail (T.G.), Pied Wagtail (T.G.), Meadow Pipit (T.G.), Chaffinch, Lesser Redpoll (T.G.).

Mammals: Muntjac (slots), Grey Squirrel, Mole (hills), Badger (tracks by A10).

Reptile: Slow-worm (T.G.).

Fungi: *Stereum hirsutum*, *Coriolus versicolor*, *Panellus stipticus*, *Crepidotus variabilis*.

Lichens (Andrew Harris/Paula Shipway): *Enterographa crassa*, *Graphis scripta*, *Lepraria lobificans*, *Opegrapha vermicellifera*, *Opegrapha* spp., *Pertusaria hymeneae*, *Pertusaria leioplaca* (all on Hornbeam by Ermine Street; *Peltigera hymenium*, *Cladonia* spp. (by A10); *Lecanora stenotropa* (railings from Lucy Warren car park)



TRING NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM AND TRING PARK

Saturday 9th January

10 members

The weather forecast for the day was for plenty of heavy rain showers so the thought of spending half a day in the museum helped to encourage nine members out to join me for this meeting. We managed to find each other despite the throng that had assembled for a 5 Km run in the Park.

The majority of the stuffed animals in the museum were once the private collection of Baron Walter Rothschild, but in 1937 he gave the building and his collection to the nation. Going through life it is very easy to take things for granted and our morning in the museum reminded me how lucky we are to have this resource on our doorstep.

We went round the museum in small groups but met up for a cup of coffee in the late morning. It was a first visit for some members and they were impressed by the size of the collection; the gallery with birds proved to be popular and it was interesting to be able to compare the Common Tern with the Roseate Tern at close quarters despite the loss of the pink hue in the Roseate Tern. Looking at other birds I noticed in particular the beautiful markings on the wings of a Brambling. For anyone with an interest in studying birds it is useful to be able to compare the different species, for example, a Stock Dove with a Rock Dove.

Time was also spent looking at the cabinets where beetles, bugs and stick insects from around the world are displayed. In particular one Stick Insect from Australia *Eurycrema goliath* was an awe inspiring sight with the scientific name giving us a clue to its size.

It was generally agreed that with so much to see in the museum more time was needed but we continued with the original plan to spend the afternoon in Tring Park. After a hurried picnic in our cars we set off for a loop round the park noting Green Alkanet in flower on the edge of the car park. As we approached the pedestrian footbridge over the new by-pass we had a good view of a Goldcrest and on the bridge I pointed out a lichen, *Xanthoria*

elegans that has established itself on the concrete along with *Lecanora muralis*, sometimes known as the chewing gum lichen. In the park we walked cautiously up the slope towards the woods in the direction of the obelisk, as recent rain had made the chalk very slippery, and I added Robin and Blue Tit to my list. On the zigzag route that we took Andrew pointed out the basal leaves of a Bee Orchid *Ophrys apifera* and at the top of the slope we noted some very large Mole hills.

As we started to walk through the wood I was deep in conversation and was called back to look at a patch of Winter Aconites that I had missed seeing. I pointed out an interesting lichen on a lime tree, *Thelotrema lepadinum*, which also goes by the common name of Barnacle Lichen. This lichen is a survivor from the pre-industrial revolution times when the air was clean. We also saw *Enterographa crassa*, which belongs to the same lichen community. Close to the obelisk there was large patch of Woodruff, and Patricia picked a leaf to chew! I was curious and followed her lead and was very interested to note the sweet taste.

Andrew pointed out the distinctive seeds on a dead stand of Upright Hedge Parsley and we also saw a few plants in flower along the track. These included Herb Robert, Nipplewort, Wood Avens and Common Daisy. Spotting a few plants in flower was not particularly unexpected, considering how warm the previous few weeks had been, but I was astonished to learn from Wendy that during a survey in Hackney in London the previous weekend a grand total of 61 species of plants in flower had been recorded!

We followed the old ride through the woods, pausing to note Sulphur-tuft fungus growing towards the base of a fallen tree in the historic circle that is being restored by the Woodland Trust. Just past the circle I pointed out another ancient tree with a good colony of lichens, including *Pyrrhospora quernea* and *Pertusaria amara*.

We had to negotiate some very sticky mud before dropping down from the woodland back onto the grassland and, following a route back across the park, we saw a group of five Magpies then a Rabbit warren beneath an old hawthorn tree. I led the group to a lovely veteran Maple tree that has proved to be another hotspot for lichens. However, as the light was going the group was unimpressed by the minute pin lichen *Chaenotheca hispidula*

in its only recorded site in Hertfordshire. In bright light the pin heads are clearly visible because of a bright green/yellow pruina.

Cattle now graze the grass in the park and we were surprised to see the stampeding herd heading up the valley towards us. We stood our ground and were pleased when they had gone past us. We gathered from a dog walker that hay had just been left at the top of the valley for them.

Back in the car park we said our goodbyes and agreed that it had been another interesting and varied BNA day.

Paula Shipway

HERTS BRANCH AGM

Saturday 23rd January

Twenty-two people attended the 70th AGM of Herts Branch, including three who became members during the meeting.

During his Chairman's report, Trevor James asked people to stand and remember five past and present members who had died during the previous year: Warren Bevan, Gerald Salisbury, Lorna Arnold, John Baker and Frances Hughes. On a brighter note, however, Trevor considered that the Branch had enjoyed another very active and positive year which included a technical highlight. Joe Gray was warmly thanked for his hard work to smarten up our image by creating a website dedicated to Herts Branch. The Branch also now has a poster/programme downloadable from the website.

Chris James told members that 22 field meetings had been led by members, including one just over the Cambridgeshire boundary and another using the train to return to the starting point. Only 4 members and a spouse took part in the summer weekend to Breckland, however, and only 5 members so far had booked to join the winter weekend, so maybe Branch holidays are no longer wanted.

Chris thanked Andrew Harris for continuing to produce an attractive and very

readable Bulletin and Merle Gwyn for hosting committee meetings. David Shipway presented the accounts. 56 subscriptions and sundry donations had realised an income of £432.00. However, expenditure (on printing and distribution of the Bulletin and on distribution of our new poster to libraries) exceeded income for the second year running, creating a working deficit. Although the balance carried forward to 2016 was almost £500.00, a continuing deficit will soon reduce this so David proposed that the Branch subscription should be increased to £7 per head in 2017. This was supported unanimously by members.

Chris James (Secretary), Merle Gwyn (Publicity), Andrew Harris (Editor) and Paula Shipway (Programme) were all re-elected to the Committee.

Species reports were given by Peter Alton, Mike Demidecki, Andrew Harris, and Trevor James. Joe Gray promised to give his first full report on bugs at the next AGM.

The formal meeting was followed as always by a sumptuous tea and 'slide' show – actually individual power-point presentations from members.

WINTER WEEKEND on the SUFFOLK COAST

Friday 5th - Sunday 7th February

9 members

Our little group (minus Tom and Janet Gladwin, who were staying at their cottage at Wangford) sojourned at Amber House, right on the front at Southwold, where we were welcomed by the strangely aptly-named proprietress, Lou Spring, of the gravelly voice and cackling laugh! We were delighted to have Laura Gravestock with us for the weekend, after her terrible year, although she wasn't up to being out with us all the time. We miss you, Laura!

The Saturday became increasingly windy and grey, with 'weather' coming in from the south. We went to Tinkers' Walks in the Blyth Estuary, and walked down to the inn at Blythburgh, where the woods gave us some shelter. Goldcrests were abundant in the trees, and we saw and heard two Firecrests as well. By the path, on a low oak tree, we were treated to fine views of a Treecreeper at close quarters; while the flora included already-flowering

Climbing *Corydalis Ceratocapnos claviculata*. Sharp-eyed Laura found the leaves of Bird's-foot *Ornithopus perpusillus* in the turf along the track in the Walks; while here also, on the way back, we became aware of the frequent excavations of active Minotaur Beetles *Typhaea typhoeus*.

Down by the more open marshes of Blythburgh Creek, we had reasonable, if distant, views of at least 150 Avocets on the mud, as well as maybe 1000+ Dunlins, 500+ Knots, 100+ Redshanks, and a few other species of wader, such as Curlew, Grey Plover, Oystercatcher and Curlew. There was no sign, though, of Ringed Plover. A Marsh Harrier quartered the reeds, while the water held a few Wigeon, at least one male Goosander, small parties (50+) of Shelduck, 100+ Teal, small flocks of Brent Geese and Mallard. There were also at least 100 Lapwings, and a large (200+) flock in the distance which we reckoned to be Golden Plovers, by their flight and the flash of white beneath as they turned. Tom and Janet eventually joined us from the pub, reporting Goldeneye and a Water Rail. David Shipway also saw a lone Little Egret. The return walk to the cars was alongside a massive pig farm, which smelt wonderful, but was incredibly thin on birds, other than Black-headed Gulls and a few Jackdaws.

Later that afternoon, we walked down from East Hill to Old Town Marshes, below Southwold, with the expanse of the reed beds opening before us. The wind was pretty severe, and so birds were not exactly in evidence, with only one Reed Bunting and a skulking Little Egret of any note.

The Sunday dawned bright and sunny, but still with strong southerly winds. We at last found some House Sparrows by the guest house before we left, and then headed for Dunwich, where we walked out north alongside Dunwich Forest to Great Dingle and then back along the beach to the car park. The landscape was superb, with the bright sun accentuating the colours of reed marsh, grassland and shingle bar against the distant sea.

Our initial mile or two was undertaken in the false belief that the wind had abated, as we were sheltered from the south-west. As we headed out across the marsh from Great Dingle, though, we realised our error! Lunch was had cowering just below the ridge-line of the shingle bar, but the walk back against the wind was something else! If we had needed a work-out for our leg muscles, we certainly got it.



The BNA party at Dingle Marshes.

Photo: Trevor James

Bird life was a bit limited again by the weather, but we did see or hear a good range of things, notably a fine male Marsh Harrier over Walberswick Marshes, where we also had 100+ Greylag Geese, some Gadwall and a Dabchick calling, good views of Little Egret near Dunwich, a solitary Guillemot off-shore, a Red-throated Diver seen by Chris James, and a large flotilla of Common Scoters (100 or so) also off-shore. Paula Shipway had a good look at the lichens at St James Church, Dunwich, and then we adjourned to Dunwich Heath, above Minsmere towards dusk, where we hoped, in vain, to see Dartford Warblers. In fact, despite a lengthy walk round, there were almost no birds in evidence, apart from our first and only Moorhen! But there were hoards of people walking dogs!

The following day, on the way home, Chris and I stopped off at Dunwich Forest for a while in the hope of finding a few more things, sheltered from the ongoing storm, but even here, all we could find of interest was a pair of Marsh Tits!

Despite the weather, though, I think we enjoyed our stay in different surroundings.

Birds over the weekend: Red-throated Diver, Dabchick, Cormorant, Shag, Guillemot, Grey Heron, Little Egret, Mute Swan, Brent Goose, Greylag Goose, Canada Goose, Shelduck, Mallard, Gadwall, Teal, Wigeon, Common Scoter, Goldeneye, Goosander, Marsh Harrier, Pheasant, Moorhen, Water Rail, Curlew, Redshank, Knot, Dunlin, Avocet, Oystercatcher, Grey Plover, Golden Plover, Lapwing, Greater Black-backed Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Common Gull, Black-headed Gull, Wood Pigeon, Collared Dove, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Skylark, Blackbird, Robin, Goldcrest, Firecrest, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Coal Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Treecreeper, Dunnock, Wren, Carrion Crow, Jackdaw, Magpie, Jay, Starling, Pied Wagtail, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Siskin, Linnet, Reed Bunting, House Sparrow.

Chris and Trevor James

TEWINBURY NATURE RESERVE **and the surrounding area**

Sunday 21st February

8 members, 2 visitors



Photo: Merle Gwyn

Tewinbury Nature Reserve is a small but varied habitat site adjacent to the River Mimram, an environmentally valuable chalk stream. The variety of habitats include wet meadow, tall swamp, alder carr, willow scrub, willow pollards and chalk stream. The wildlife occurring in some of these habitats can be observed from a double-decker hide created during 2010, funded by the Heritage Lottery and East Herts District Council.

Unexpectedly, there was no rain forecast, as it had been exceptionally wet. Ten people met at the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust's car park situated by the drive to Tewinbury Farm Hotel. From the hide two pairs of Gadwall were noted, along with other birds identified during the walk, in the list below.

From the hotel a path led to St Peters Church, Tewin, where some lichens in the churchyard were identified by Andrew Harris. An easterly route took us on a path overlooking the Mimram Valley, via a set-aside field then through Lambsdell Wood to the outskirts of Marden Hill House. To avoid a very muddy path through an open agricultural field, we walked on a very minor road leading to Tewin. From this road William observed a Hare in a ploughed field. A path led off this road towards Home Wood. As this was a figure-of-eight walk we entered the same set aside field again where the distinctive calls of many Skylarks were heard. In Home Wood a Fox skull was found and identified. After lunch Trevor was busy sifting through leaf litter looking for invertebrates especially beetles.

Having crossed the figure-of-eight the path continued down to the River Mimram. Following the river we returned back to Tewinbury. At one point the path was adjacent to the chalk stream, where Dan Asaw observed a flash of blue, which resulted in a close view of a Kingfisher, then a Little Egret. With one last viewing from the hide, the day concluded by the call of a Bullfinch.

Birds (with some additions from Trevor James, William Bishop): Grey Heron, Little Egret, Red Kite, Buzzard, Sparrowhawk, Peregrine, Kestrel, Gadwall, Mallard, Canada Goose, Coot, Moorhen, Common Gull, Black-headed Gull, Stock Dove, Wood Pigeon, Collared Dove, Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Kingfisher, Skylark, Mistle Thrush, Redwing, Blackbird, Robin, Goldcrest, Great Tit, Blue tit, Coal Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Treecreeper, Wren, Carrion Crow, Rook, Jackdaw, Magpie, Jay, Starling, Meadow Pipit, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Siskin, Bullfinch, Yellowhammer. [It should be noted that the Peregrine was seen by Simon Knott and William Bishop over the Mimram Valley near Tewinbury- T.J.]

Mammals (records: T.J./W.B.): Muntjac, Mole (hills), Rabbit, Grey Squirrel, Badger (sett at Lambdell Wood), Brown Hare.

Plants (a few of note)(records: T.J.): Intermediate Polypody *Polypodium interjectum* – spotted by Andrew Harris on roof at Marden Hill; Wall-rue *Asplenium ruta-muraria* – on old river bridge at Archer’s Green; Mistletoe *Viscum album* – much on limes at Marden Hill; Butterbur *Petasites hybridus* – appearing by R. Mimram, Tewinbury; Colt’s-foot *Tussilago farfara* – in flower near Archer’s Green.

Fungi (records: T.J.): *Polyporus brumalis* (on log by Tewin Road)(det. Chris James later); *Auricularia auricular-judae*, *Ganoderma adspersum*.

Beetles (Lambdell Wood)(records: T.J., with help from W.B.): *Nebria brevicollis*, *Loricera pilicornis*, *Abax parallelepipedus*, *Oxypoda annularis*, *Habrocerus pilicornis*, *Othius punctulatus*, *Ocypus olens* (Devil’s Coach-horse), *Coccinella septempunctata* (Seven-spot Ladybird).

Lichens (Andrew Harris): The best record was of *Leptorhaphis atomaria* found growing prolifically on Poplar by William Bishop. A sample of this first travelled to north Bedfordshire for its identity to be confirmed then on to Surrey to be photographed, as it was a particularly fine example of the species. Besides the churchyard, the fences were very good for lichens, including the bearded lichen *Usnea subfloridana*, which is not common now.

Species list:		
<i>Amandinea punctata</i>	<i>Hypotrachyna afrorevoluta</i>	<i>Parmelia sulcata</i>
<i>Anisomeridium polypori</i>	<i>Lecania cyrtella</i>	<i>Phaeophyscia orbicularis</i>
<i>Arthonia radiata</i>	<i>Lecanora albescens</i>	<i>Phlyctis argena</i>
<i>Aspicilia contorta</i>	<i>Lecanora campestris</i>	<i>Physcia adscendens</i>
<i>Caloplaca arcis</i>	<i>Lecanora carpinea</i>	<i>Physcia aipolia</i>
<i>Caloplaca dichroa</i>	<i>Lecanora chlorotera</i>	<i>Physcia caesia</i>
<i>Caloplaca flavescens</i>	<i>Lecanora conizaeoides</i>	<i>Physcia dubia</i>
<i>Caloplaca holocarpa</i>	<i>Lecanora dispersa</i>	<i>Physcia tenella</i>
<i>Caloplaca teicholyta</i>	<i>Lecanora expallens</i>	<i>Placynthiella icmalea</i>
<i>Candelariella aurella</i>	<i>Lecanora hagenii</i>	<i>Protoblastenia rupestris</i>
<i>Candelariella reflexa</i>	<i>Lecanora muralis</i>	<i>Psilolechia lucida</i>
<i>Candelariella vitellina</i>	<i>Lecanora symmicta</i>	<i>Punctelia jeckeri</i>
<i>Cladonia coniocraea</i>	<i>Lecidea grisella</i>	<i>Punctelia subrudecta</i> .
<i>Diploicia canescens</i>	<i>Lecidella elaeochroma</i>	<i>Ramalina farinacea</i>
<i>Diploschistes scruposus</i>	<i>Lecidella scabra</i>	<i>Ramalina fastigiata</i>
<i>Evernia prunastri</i>	<i>Lepraria incana s. str.</i>	<i>Rinodina oleae</i>
<i>Flavoparmelia soledians</i>	<i>Leptorhaphis atomaria</i>	<i>Trapeliopsis flexuosa</i>
<i>Hypogymnia physodes</i>	<i>Melanelixia glabratula</i>	<i>Usnea subfloridana</i>
<i>Hypogymnia cf. tubulosa</i>	<i>Melanelixia subaurifera</i>	<i>Xanthoria parietina</i>
		<i>Xanthoria polycarpa</i>

SOCIAL EVENING and PRESENTATION 'INVERTEBRATE RECORDING IN HERTS'

Saturday 5th March

A nice crowd gathered at Digswell Church Hall for a talk by a relatively new branch member, Joe Gray. Joe has taken on the recording of true bugs (Hemiptera) in Hertfordshire for the Herts Natural History Society. A real enthusiast, he told us that he had already set aside the dates for a programme of recording of insects throughout the year, carefully avoiding the BNA programme. These recording days will be the basis of a Herts Invertebrate Study Group. Because the group had barely got going, there wasn't a lot of material with which he could make a proper presentation, so he begged to be excused!

Instead, Joe gave us a fascinating talk with amazing photos of a holiday based in a small cottage in France – a holiday where Joe tried to squeeze in as much bug-hunting as possible without losing the love of his wife, Romita! Without going far from the garden and nearby meadows, Joe found a wide range of insects of all kinds, many of which are totally unfamiliar to us. Just a few hundred miles makes such a difference – but maybe for not much longer!

Thank you Joe for a great talk – we look forward to hearing more from you next year.

Chris James



Hairy Shieldbug
Photo: Andrew Harris

HEBING END

Saturday 19th March

9 members

The party gathered off the main road at Hebing End, Benington, despite the disapproval of one local resident! As the roadway here was pretty wide, and we were not in anyone's way, we wondered why! After recording the usual birds around the starting point, including a fine male Song Thrush, the group moved off east towards Hebing End Pond, where we spent some time being entertained by the local Common Frog population in their spawning activities!



Common Frog at Hebing End Pond Photo: Trevor James

A large patch of Three-cornered Garlic *Allium triquetrum* was also noted by the path – a steadily expanding and potentially invasive alien (another less-invasive one had been seen by the road earlier, Greek Squill *Scilla messeniaca*).

The field path beyond took us past Hebing End tufa spring – a strange habitat with mounds of crusty tufa deposits around the spring source under willows. This is a rare (and threatened) habitat in western Europe, so rather special. We were pleased to see that Opposite-leaved Golden-saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium* was still in plenty here, along with Primroses.

William Bishop spotted a Sparrowhawk over the valley, and we disturbed a Red-legged Partridge as well. Two Buzzards soared and there were also several singing Skylarks.

We proceeded downhill and then across to Witnesses Wood, a strange collection of old woodland stands alongside the parish boundary, some of which have been lost over the last 50 years, as maps show. The remaining are however very interesting, with ancient Ash stools along the parish boundary bank and old oak pollards as well. Great Spotted Woodpecker, Coal Tit, Nuthatch, Treecreeper and Long-tailed Tits were in evidence, as well as a very active Badger sett by the wood margin, where the animals had piled up dry grass. I sifted some of this for beetles, while William overturned various logs and came up with a sheaf of beetles too: *Nebria brevicollis*, *Loricera pilicornis*, *Bembidion lampros*, *Bembidion obtusum*, *Pterostichus madidus* (The Clock), *Abax parallelepipedus*, *Calathus rotundicollis*, *Silpha atrata* (a snail-eating beetle), *Anotylus complanatus*, *Anotylus mutator* (only the second country record of a scarce, newly-described species!), *Aloconota gregaria*, *Mocyta orbata* (only the second county record – but it is small!), *Othius punctulatus*, *Tasgius morsitans* (a large rove beetle), and one *Coccinella septempunctata* (Seven-spot Ladybird). Quite a haul for early in the year. We also found a couple of Smooth Newts under a piece of board here and the edge of the wood produced a patch of Soft Shield-fern *Polystichum setiferum*, which is steadily increasing, as well as young plants of Pignut *Conopodium majus* and Wood Melick. As we progressed through the wood, we came across a pair of Marsh Tits, evidently on territory, and a pair of Jays.

Beyond the wood, the tracks of Fallow Deer were well in evidence and we found signs of Muntjac and Fox too. Horse droppings in the bridleway track produced the dung beetle *Aphodius prodromus* while the ground beetles *Anchomenus dorsalis* and *Pterostichus melanarius* were under logs. Another two large Badger setts were also found beside the Old Bourne. We had lunch slightly protected by the remains of a green lane hedge above the valley floor here, and sat watching the view. The white-flowered version of Sweet Violet *Viola odorata* formed an attractive backdrop by the hedge.

We climbed the slope into Graves/Banfield Woods, where the old wood-banks had Wood Anemone, Bluebell and Yellow Archangel coming up, and

Primroses. Snowdrops were established and in good flower at the edge of the wood. One hedge bank also produced a number of dead shells of Roman Snail *Helix pomatia*, which occurs in various places in this area. The dead wood snail *Clausilia bidentata* was also found.

At the southern end of Banfield Wood there is a chalky field margin round the edge of an old pit, and this has always produced good cornfield weeds. We were pleased to find that the edge seemed to be set down to a 'conservation-mix', which showed signs of allowing the survival of some of the native flora as well! We found Field Madder, Parsley-piert *Aphanes arvensis*, Thyme-leaved Sandwort *Arenaria serpyllifolia*, and two plants of Field Pennywort *Thlaspi arvense*, not a common plant these days. A Kestrel called nearby. [Later in the year, I found a few plants of Night-flowering Catchfly *Silene noctiflora* here, which has been well-known from this site for many years, but not seen for some time].

Our path led through Comb's Wood, but we did not stop too long to examine this, as we decided to extend our walk round the landscape to the south, past Loefield Grove and Gregory's Farm, back to Burn's Green Lane and our starting point. More Badger signs were found at Loefield Grove, while Yellowhammer, Mistle Thrush, Fieldfare and Redwings were added to the list. A couple of scrubby escaped Pear trees *Pyrus communis* by the road near Burn's Green Lane were actually in flower! Up the green lane, lichens were examined on a couple of old Ash trees, coated with *Evernia prunastri*, *Parmotrema perlatum*, *Ramalina farinacea*, *Parmelia sulcata*, *Ramalina* (probably *fastigiata*), *Physcia adscendens*, *Xanthoria parietina*, and *Phaeophyscia orbicularis* (thanks to Paula Shipway for names!).

By the time we got back to the cars, we felt we had had a long walk!

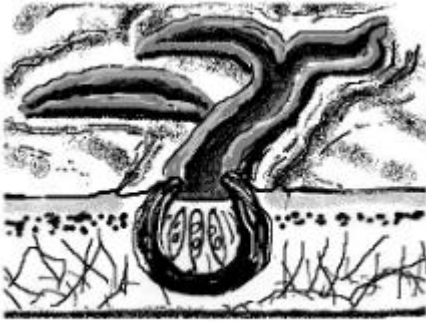
Birds: Red Kite, Buzzard, Sparrowhawk, Kestrel, Mallard, Red-legged Partridge, Pheasant, Moorhen, Wood Pigeon, Collared Dove, Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Skylark, Mistle Thrush, Fieldfare, Redwing, Song Thrush, Robin, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Coal Tit, Marsh Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Nuthatch, Treecreeper, Wren, Dunnock, Carrion Crow, Rook, Jackdaw, Magpie, Jay, Starling, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Yellowhammer.



Mammals: Mole (hills), Rabbit, Badger (setts etc.), Grey Squirrel, Fallow Deer (slots), Muntjac (droppings), Fox (scent/droppings).

Amphibians: Common Frog, Smooth Newt.

Molluscs: *Helix pomatia*, *Clausilia bidentata*, *Nesovitrea hammonis*, *Discus rotundatus*.

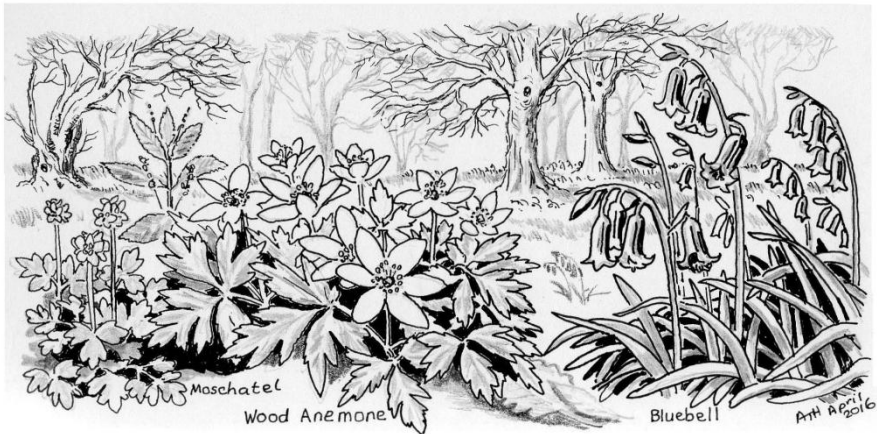


Cross section of *Graphis scripta*

Lichens (extra to those listed above, records by Paula Shipway):
Witnesses Wood: *Graphis scripta*,
Dimerella pineti, *Lecanora carpineae*;
Green lane by Old Bourne: *Lecania cyrtella*, *Lecanora hagenii*, *Caloplaca cerinella*;
Comb's Wood: *Punctelia subrudecta*, *Dimerella pineti*, *Graphis scripta*;
Burn's Green Lane: *Chaenotheca ferruginea*.

(Plants and beetles as in text above).

Trevor James





Climbing into Hoddesdon Park Wood!
Boxing Day 2015
(Photo: Chris James)



An old hornbeam hanging on by Spittal Brook
Boxing Day 2015
(Photo: Andrew Harris)



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