

*BRITISH NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION*

**Hertfordshire Branch**

***BULLETIN No.142***



Rustling End – 3<sup>rd</sup> July

William naming moths caught in the trap the previous evening

*Photo: Chris James*



Chiswell Green – 8<sup>th</sup> June  
*Photo: Chris James*



Rustling End - 3<sup>rd</sup> July – examining the contents of one of the moth traps  
*Photo: Chris James*

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### **BULLETIN 142**

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## **EDITOR'S BIT**

The last bulletin, was one with a difference, this one is back to normal! With the welcome resumption of our field meetings following the interruption caused by the pandemic, we have a variety of reports in this edition ranging from Aldbury Common in the west of the county to Wallington in the east.

At the moment I am looking out onto a parched landscape and I wonder how wildlife is coping; there seem fewer insects on the wing and the bird feeders seem especially busy as their natural foods become hard to find. These reports picture a more bountiful a greener summer last year! Having such a long-standing field programme, we can more appreciate the effects long-term trends as well as seasonal changes which affect our wildlife.

In this edition we also remember two greatly missed members, Janine Tyler and David Shipway whose quiet unassuming companionship added so much to the branch. We remember with thanks all the ways in which they have enriched our lives and the activities of this branch.

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IN MEMORIAM

Janine Tyler 10.8.36 – 3.9.21



*Janine (right) when celebrating  
Joyce's 90<sup>th</sup> in Shropshire*



*Joyce and Janine on a fungus foray  
in Balls Wood*

Janine was born in Belgium. In the 1960s, having gone to the US to work, she met her future husband David where they were both studying for their PhDs, coming to England in 1965 when they married. Softly spoken, she never lost her Belgian accent.

Janine was a member of HNHS since the early 1980s and was on the programme committee from 89 – 93 with her friend Joyce Smith during Michael Clark's tenure as president. He has fond memories of them and referred affectionately to them as "the terrible twins". *"They were such good naturalists and just plain wonderfully kind to work with. It was always fun to be at meetings and on rambles with them. Janine would help expertly with botany and took an interest in the orchard fruit here as her son has an orchard in Essex. We have a political link here too, as I identified their Gladstone apple and went on to plant one in Tewin Orchard that had its first fruit this year. We would like to put a plate underneath the tree as a*

*memorial to Janine and Joyce (who died in 2019) for all they meant to us and did for the society and wildlife generally. “*

Janine and Joyce were members of the Herts branch of the British Naturalists' Association and Cheshunt Natural History Society attending their meetings regularly. Janine's forte was in finding tiny plants overlooked by others. She found the unassuming Adderstongue in a small, relic meadow, not far from St Paul's Walden; the first record for the site. At the side of a path at Dunstable Downs she located the tiny spikes of the understated Frog Orchid. Every year she and Joyce counted the spikes of the diminutive but beautiful Fly Orchid in a small, mostly untrodden wood near Charlton.

In recent years, Janine would drive from her home in Barnet to loyally pick up Joyce (in Joyce's 80s and 90s) from Letchworth to attend monthly indoor meetings of CNHS at Goffs Oak and take her back home afterwards even in the depths of winter. On one occasion members of CNHS, having braved ice and snow, gathered round my table at home to identify 'mystery' objects – a Dunnock's nest, a Badger pelvic girdle, a Swan Mussel shell, a coprolite... It was February 2019. At the end of the meeting, when people were beginning to leave, a dripping elflike apparition (in a hood) appeared – the indomitable, incredible, unstoppable Janine. No longer owning a car, she had journeyed from Barnet by two buses, a train and a mile walk, bearing the most delicious lemon drizzle cake. What a woman!

In 2010, BNA members spent a memorable weekend in September in Shropshire. On Sunday 5 Sept the intention was to visit the Stiperstones, parking at the Bog Mine Visitor Centre. As we walked up the hill towards the stones, it rained and it blew so we retreated to the warmth of the café at the centre. Janine produced a cake and candles to celebrate Joyce's 90th birthday (actually the previous month). Janine had a habit of producing cakes at meetings.

Janine died just two weeks after being diagnosed with terminal cancer. Six weeks earlier she was still pushing her wheelchair-bound husband, David, to their local park where they would buy a lunchtime sandwich from a kiosk. She must have known how ill she was but there was never a word of complaint until she could no longer disguise her pain. It's as if she didn't want to cause any trouble to anyone. This was so typical of her.

In the words of Michael Clark: *"We mourn Janine, but also have permanent memories of two great naturalists who seemed inseparable during field work and programme preparations. We have lost so many of our colleagues from those days as Ralph Newton, Trevor James, Bryan Sage and Brian Sawford all sadly gone, too, now, but, like Janine and Joyce, their deeds are recorded in our publications and are never to be forgotten. "*

A gentle, loving stoic to the end, not only did she never complain of her pain as others would do, nor did she ever criticise or have a bad word to say about anyone. She was the most selfless person I have known and the best friend anyone could wish for.

*June Crew*



*The unlikely scenario of Joyce (aged 90) pulling Janine (aged 80) up the hill to Stiperstones, Shropshire!*

## **David Shipway**

### **1948-2021**

Many members will know that David Shipway, our Branch Treasurer for many years, died on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Several of us attended his funeral on 12<sup>th</sup> August at Aylesbury Crematorium and later we returned to the Half Moon PH in Wilstone, where we were joined by David's fellow Morris Men who danced in his memory.

David was born in 1948 in Greenwich but he moved with his family to Wilmslow for a few years before his father was promoted to a new job working for British Railways and they moved

back down to Hemel Hempstead. After a slow start at school (due to too much daydreaming!), he eventually achieved the right A Levels to attend Loughborough University where he studied Electrical Engineering. David had already started to develop his interests in canals, photography and trees.

After graduating, David accepted a job in Signals Engineering for the London Underground where he remained, working very happily until his retirement. After surviving several bedsits in London, he moved out to a flat in Harpenden which is where Paula came into his life, during 1972. They met at St Albans Folk Club where David offered Paula a lift home – and that was the start of their 45 years together! Paula and David enjoyed outdoor adventures together before getting married in 1976 – with the St Albans Morris Men in attendance. David had joined them several years earlier.



*Paula and David in the Hebrides in 2009*

*Photo: Chris James*



In the mid-1980s, in addition to his fulltime employment in London, dancing with Whitchurch Morris, helping Paula look after their two children and working on the renovation of their house at Gubblecote, David added to his interests by beginning to keep meticulous weather records. Then, in the 1990s, he started competitive canoeing. He remained active in the Leighton Buzzard Club for over thirty years, taking part in the National Marathon Championships. He and Paula also undertook several 'marathon' canoe trips including a particularly idyllic holiday exploring Loch Maree in Scotland.

David was very proud of their two children, then subsequently three grandchildren. Family holidays in sometimes remote places, camping and canoeing, were an important part of his life. With Paula he walked numerous long-distance paths, totalling over a thousand miles. All of this undoubtedly encouraged David's deep love and appreciation of nature and wild places. In BNA, we particularly valued David's interest in and knowledge of trees, including conifers (which some of us find difficult to identify with confidence). David attended a Conifer ID course run by the BSBI and both he and Paula were supporting members of Westonbirt Arboretum. And, of course, we are tremendously grateful for his meticulous keeping of the Branch's accounts which he did until his health deteriorated early in 2021.

During 2020, it became clear to Paula & David that their enjoyment of long walks together had come to an end, so they chose a more sedentary hobby and bought a moth trap. They were delighted in identifying over 230 species caught in their back garden during that summer.

David died too soon but he will be remembered by all of us as a kind and gentle man who we probably got to know best during our branch holidays - cruising around the Outer Hebrides in July 2009, on our Geological Holiday in Shropshire in 2010 and again in Yorkshire for Geology in 2014.

*Chris James*

**MEETING REPORTS**

## **HERTFORD HEATH**

**Sunday 23 May 2021**

10 members plus 1 visitor

This was the first meeting for over a year so there was a pleasing number of members who were all very happy that we were able to resume our fortnightly meetings.

We spent most of our time visiting the Nature Reserves to the north and east of London Road and later in the afternoon ventured into The Roundings and Balls Wood Nature Reserves south and west of London Road. Walking along Heath Lane, our first sighting was a clump of bright blue Monkshood plants, making a statement against a dull day threatening rain and most probably a garden escape and very poisonous. Once inside Goldington's Wood we marvelled at the very many, gnarled and twisted and ancient Hornbeams and heard our first Chiffchaff. There were a number of mature and veteran Pedunculate Oaks with an understorey of mostly Holly and Hawthorn, both in flower. There were the inevitable patches of Green Alkanet with Honeysuckle, Common Dog Violet, Wild Arum, Cow Parsley and Wood Speedwell.

Reaching our first pond, one of many, we spent some time investigating the plant and insect life. The Greater Stitchwort flowers brightened up a rather dull day. The tall shoots Wood Millet were also very attractive and there were a number of young Broom plants. Our attention was drawn to a Garlic Mustard plant where our visitor pointed out an orange egg of the Orange-tip Butterfly clinging to a flower stalk. The pond supported many Plicate Sweet-grass plants but sadly no Water Violet which Trevor had hoped we might find.

Continuing north into Much Wood we were pleased to see many groups of Wood Anemone throughout, in fruit, but sadly we were too late for the flowers. This wood and the neighbouring Leafy Oak Wood were younger with fewer ancient trees but we entered an area with old hedge banks on either side of the track with Hornbeams obviously layered at some time in the distant past. We turned round to return, joining a narrow path with small patches of Hairy Wood-rush, Heath Speedwell and Wood-sedge. On looking

more closely, at a solitary flower of Wood Anemone, Simon and William spotted a Scorpion Fly. Lunch followed, accompanied by the singing of a Blackcap and afterwards, searching through the wood, we found a Wild Service Tree surrounded by a number of saplings together with Broad Buckler and Male Ferns. Continuing back through Goldington's, towards Haileybury College, we were pleased to identify Common Cow-wheat, Yellow Archangel, Bugle and finally Small-flowered Balsam and Shining Crane's-bill.

We re-crossed London Road and made our way to The Roundings Nature Reserve which was very much wetter than anyone had ever seen before with the many ponds now full of water. The main reason we then continued on to Balls Wood Nature Reserve was to look for the Herb Paris plants which a number of us had seen in the past, but sadly we were unlucky and could not find them. On a happier note, considering the heavy downpours, thunder and hailstones of the previous week, we experienced very little rain during our very enjoyable visit.

I would like to thank Alla for her list of 85 plants in flower. Paula's list of Lichens and William's list of birds and insects are listed below.

*Jean Williamson.*

**Lichens:-**

*Sarcogyne regularis* on the concrete infill by the pub

*Phylloblastia inexpectata* on Holly leaves as we entered Goldingtons

*Dimerella pineti* in crevices in the bark of Oak trees by the pond

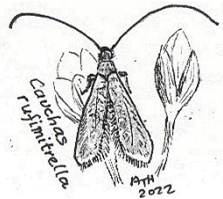
*Lepraria incana* also on Oak trunks by the pond

*Parmotrema perlatum* on fallen bark lying on the ground close to the pond.

**Birds** seen or heard:- Magpie, Carrion Crow, Robin, Goldfinch, Chiffchaff, Blackbird, Wood Pigeon, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Jackdaw, Wren, Blackcap, Nuthatch, Siskin, Kestrel, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Chaffinch, Whitethroat, Starling and Great Spotted Woodpecker.

**Slime mould;-** was possibly *Lycogala terrestre*

**Moths:-** *Cauchas rufimitrella* (Hertford Heath morning), Orange Footman (found by Rose, on leaves), Common Wave (netted in Balls Wood), *Nematopogon swammerdamella* (Hertford Heath, found by Simon on return to cars)



## GREENWOOD PARK (HOW WOOD), ST ALBANS

Sunday 6 June

9 members

Warning: this report has a long list of invertebrates because I got fascinated and overwhelmed with them during the walk.

The meeting was planned as a How Wood meeting, but we never got there. We started by exploring Greenwood Park on our way to How Wood, and it took us the whole day. In my opinion, that was great as we saw lots of invertebrates due to the nice warm weather. Many thanks to William for finding and identifying all those things!

We set off at Midway Surgery car park, where we saw bee orchid rosettes in the past. This time, the lawn was neatly trimmed, with no orchids in sight. Nevertheless, William spotted one in flower! Two other notable species were Changing Forget-me-not *Myosotis discolor* and Common Cudweed *Filago vulgaris*.

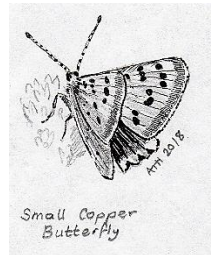


Grassland in Greenwood Park had plenty to offer. Common Malachite *Malachius bipustulatus*, a tiny leaf beetle *Chrysolina hyperici* on St John's-wort *Hypericum hirsutum* and a few Hook-streak Grass-veneer moths *Crambus lathoniellus*, typically found on grass, were spotted by William. Wendy pointed to intricate spider webs. Catherine took a photo of a damselfly which was later identified as a Common Blue Damselfly. We approached a Butterfly enclosure where the chalk was added and seeded with a mixture of plants to attract Small Blue butterflies. Kidney-vetch *Anthyllis vulneraria* (Small Blue caterpillar food plant) was prominent, together with Common Bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* showing off its yellow-and-orange flowers (nectar source for the Small Blue and caterpillar food plant for the Common Blue) and Common Rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularium* (also nectar source and one of the caterpillar food plants for the Brown Argus). We came across Rough Hawk's-beard *Crepis biennis* and checked that there were no stalks between seeds and the pappus (fluffy hairs) distinguishing this species from Beaked Hawk's-beard. Invertebrates were all around us – Soldier Beetle *Cantharis*



*rustica*, Hairy Shieldbug *Dolycoris baccarum*, Mitre Shieldbug *Aelia acuminata*, bugs *Calocoris quadripunctata* and *Dryophilocoris flavoquadrimaculatus*, 7-spot *Coccinella septempunctata* and 16-spot *Tytthaspis sedecimpunctata* ladybirds, a caterpillar, and a weevil. William's sweep net proved to be very useful!

Fragrant Agrimony *Agrimonia procera* was scattered around the grassland's margins. This species used to be rare but has been increasing recently. We saw Red *Silene dioica* and White *S. latifolia* Campions, and a hybrid between the two *S. x hampeana* showing intermediate colour. William kept sweeping and showed us a 'kissing fly' *Platystoma seminationis* and Tortoise beetle *Cassida rubiginosa* agg. Another leaf beetle *Chrysolina oricalcia* was spotted on flowers of Cow Parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*, and a few bumblebees were buzzing on Russian Comfrey *Symphytum x uplandicum*. Whitethroat song was so loud that it could not be missed. With the sun getting higher, butterflies started to appear – a white, Common Blue, Small Copper and Orange-tip. We saw Champion's Anther Smut *Microbotryum violaceus* making anthers of White Champion look sooty. Dock Bug *Coreus marginatus*, Common Longhorn *Grammoptera* sp., 14-spotted *Propylea quattuordecimpunctata* and Harlequin *Harmonia axyridis* ladybirds followed. And then William got properly excited with an unusually shaped rove beetle *Scaphidium quadrimaculatum*, which was rare even for William. Luckily, the beetle did not disappear when approached and allowed many photos to be taken.



We settled for a lunch break besides Julian's Wood. A Kestrel came to investigate, accompanied by singing from Blackcap and Chiffchaff. Many Raspberry flowers lacked petals and looked like furry balls. Jean found an Orange-tip egg, a tiny orange blob attached to Garlic Mustard stem. That was exciting, as we had learned how to find eggs from Alison during the previous walk. We touched upon the edge of the wood, and William found a tiny moth which he later identified as *Triaxomera parasitella* living in bracket fungi, especially Turkey Tail.

Back in the open and following a hedge we found mite galls on Field Maple and Cleavers, "uncommon" galls on oak, Swollen-thighed beetle *Oedomera nobilis*, vibrant Common White Wave moth *Cabera pusaria*, Kentish Snail



*Monacha cantiana*, Cabbage bug *Eurydema oleracea* and a Crab spider. We admired Long-headed *Papaver dubium* and Common *Papaver rhoeas* Poppies and labyrinths of mines on Smooth Sowthistle *Sonchus oleraceus* leaves in the car park. The Community centre offered flowerbeds with “weird” plants, Honey Locust and a welcome coffee enjoyed by William. Large patches of Black Medick *Medicago lupulina* and Lesser Trefoil *Trifolium dubium* provided a great opportunity for comparison, typical trefoil heads of brown drooping fruits contrasting with coiled black fruits of medick. William caught Ashy Mining Bee *Andrena cineraria* with prominent ashy-grey hair bands on its thorax. We explored an egg clutch under a Sycamore leaf and wondered whether a winged aphid sitting nearby had anything to do with it or just happened to shelter at the same spot. Looking at leaves proved to be awe-inspiring, with more galls/rust/eggs on Hawthorn and aphids on Herb Bennet *Geum urbanum*, to name a few. Flowers of Common Nettle *Urtica dioica* were stunning if you took care to notice them, with snow-white male and less conspicuous greenish female ones housed on different plants and reminding where the name *dioica* (meaning “of two houses”) comes from. Spotting a bright Red-headed Cardinal Beetle *Pyrochroa serraticornis* climbing nettles was a bonus. Holly Blue on Ivy and Holly Leaf-miner (on Holly) were spotted when passing the wood edge on the way back.

Back in the car park, freshly opened Dog Rose flowers set “peace-of-mind” mood to finish this full of fascination walk...

We did not get to How Wood, but we saw so much on the way. I wish I could describe the excitement of discovering more and more species. Many thanks to everyone!

*Joe Grey*

**Moths** not mentioned in the text (thanks William!): *Dichrorampha alpinana*, *Pseudargyrotoza conwagana*, *Autographa gamma*

**Birds:** Blackbird, Blackcap, Chaffinch, Chiffchaff, Carrion Crow, Dunnock, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Great Tit, Kestrel, Magpie, Red Kite, Robin, Song Thrush, Swift, Whitethroat, Wren

**Mammals:** Grey Squirrel

Plant species in flower: 111



## ALDBURY COMMON

Saturday 19 June

7 Members



The weather was overcast and everywhere was wet following overnight rain. The temperature decidedly cool. We met at Tom's Hill Carpark. Using the Ashridge Estate map, I intended to do the Rangers' Ramble, three miles that takes two hours apparently.

We set off heading north into the woods, towards the visitor centre. Here we encountered carpets of Small Balsam *Impatiens parviflora*, looking rather attractive. There was Chicken of the Woods *Laetiporus sulphureus* on a log, spotted by Claudi, this was a fungus we were to see several times in perfect condition. In a clearing by the wood edge, I netted the common but incredibly beautiful moth Yellow Shell *Camptogramma bilineata*. Here we were caught up by Dan, who arrived after us. We saw several of the elegant long shelled snails of the Clausiliidae on the wet tree trunks. The wood floor was fairly well carpeted with low herbage, including Sweet Woodruff and Sanicle. Peter asked what was singing in the trees and we worked out it was a Stock Dove. Dan then found a nice example of the snail *Pomatias elegans*, the only British snail with an operculum. Some helleborines were spotted but all were flowerless until we found a single White Helleborine *Cephalanthera damasonium* with a flower, but it was very tatty. A little earlier an orchid was spotted by Catherine that Alla later established was a Bee Orchid *Ophrys apifera*.



After three hours (and about a quarter of the route!) we arrived at the visitor centre and monument. We choose a suitable unoccupied log and had lunch. This is a popular spot and there were many examples of *Homo sapiens* around.

After lunch, we headed into Meadley's Meadow. In a caged area at the far side were a few Common Spotted Orchids *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*. The only butterflies of the day were here, some Meadow Browns *Maniola jurtina*. Dan then starting spotting small piles of deer dung and the inevitable search for dung beetles occurred (a coleopterist is always happy playing with poo). Under a log I discovered a few bigger beetles, all Carabids – *Pterostichus*

*madidus*, *P. niger* and *Abax parallelepipedus*. Back into the wood and Simon found the hoverfly *Xylota segnis*, a sawfly mimic; later, we spotted about sixty more, an impressive sight. By this stage I had lost my site map. We continued noting large stands of foxgloves where they had removed some of the understorey. In one area there was a dead pine tree worthy of inspection, and under the bark we found a large jumping spider that was later identified as *Marpissa muscosa*. Continuing I spotted a straggling patch of a plant I have not seen for 41 years, Yellow Figwort *Scrophularia vernalis*. Looking in Trevor's Flora it has been known in Herts since 1843 but around Hatfield and then St Albans. It is a strange plant, not exactly attractive and as Peter observed has an odd smell. Claudi found a small cluster of Collared Parachute fungi *Marasmius rotula* on a twig, they were in perfect condition and incredibly beautiful. We came out by Thunderdell Cottages, way off track thanks to my map loss. We headed down the road and back into the wood to cut off the corner. We got back to the car park at 5pm, having completed half the Rangers' ramble in seven hours. It would take fourteen hours at that rate for seven naturalists to do the whole route! We agreed that we had seen some interesting things though, made our farewells and headed home.

Thank you to my companions for a good day and some good conversations about nature.

**Bird List** – Wood Pigeon, Nuthatch, Chiffchaff, Robin, Blue Tit, Stock Dove, Chaffinch, Blackbird, Jackdaw, Carrion Crow, Jay, Red Kite, Coal Tit, Blackcap.

**Fungi List** (thanks to Claudi) – *Stereum hirsutum* (Hairy Curtain Crust), *Trametes versicolor* (Turkeytail), *Ganoderma australe* (Southern Bracket), *Xylaria hypoxylon* (Candlesnuff Fungus), *Laetiporus sulphureus* (Chicken of the Woods), *Marasmius rotula* (Collared Parachute), *Polyporus tuberaster* (Tuberous Polypore).

**Beetle List** (thanks to Dan) - *Onthophagus joanne*, *Coccinella septempunctata*, *Notiophilus biguttatus*, *Pterostichus nigra*, *Abax parallelepipedus*, *Anotylus sculpturatus*, *Calathus rotundicollis*, *Asaphidion curtum*, *Agrilinus ater*, *Phyllobius roboretanus*, *Ceutorhynchus obstrictus*, *Sphaeroderma testaceum*, *Malthinus flaveolus*, *Malthodes marginatus*, *Atreceus affinis*, *Dorcus parallelepipedus*, *Byturus ochraceus*, *Cantharis flavibalis*, *Pterostichus madidus*, *Byturus tomentosus* & *Malachius bipustulatus*.

*William Bishop.*

## **RUSLING END**

**Saturday 3 July**

### **NATIONAL MEADOWS DAY**

We met in Rustling End cottage meadow a grassland of 3 acres surrounded by mixed native hedgerows punctuated by Ash trees and a line of mature Oaks on the western boundary. I wasn't aware at the time but Wendy Knowles kindly messaged me later to tell me it was National Meadows Day, how appropriate!

The previous evening, we had set our moth traps to catch moths for identification today. William Bishop also brought a moth trap that had been set out in his garden the night before. We were pleased to have William out with us as his moth i/d skills are excellent.

After a walk through the meadow, we entered the garden to check the two moth traps. It had rained the evening before so one of the moth traps wasn't very successful. However, we had placed one in the entrance of the green house which was more productive.

After lunch in the garden, we walked down across the arable field along past Graffidge Wood where in the margins we saw Field Poppy, Field Pansy, Field Madder, Black Medick, Field Forget-me-not, Smaller Cat's-tail, Hop Trefoil, Corn Marigold & Field Horsetail. We then arrived at the beautiful meadow below Langley where we spent some time looking and noting the diversity of flora. This meadow has much improved by the autumn grazing of sheep which has helped to restrain the more vigorous grasses. We then turned left across a farm track returning uphill between two arable fields into the meadow opposite Rusling End Farmhouse where we saw Common spotted-orchid and Pignut seedheads amongst the flowering plants. Another meadow whose plant diversity has been much improved by selected sheep grazing. It was only a short circular walk but still took us a couple of hours.

**Alla** noted 76 plant species in flower.

**Birds** seen or heard: Carrion Crow, Red Kite, Blue Tit, Jay, Chiffchaff, Wren, Blackbird, Skylark, Blackcap, Swallow, Song Thrush,

**Butterflies:** Marbled White, Ringlet, Meadow Brown, Small Heath, Small Tortoiseshell, Large Skipper

**Insects:** 7-spot Ladybird, Soldier Beetle, Bloodvein Moth

My thanks to Alla Mashanova and William Bishop for their ident lists.

Julie Wise

## FLOWERING PLANT LIST



Betony



Field Bindweed

<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	<b>Yarrow</b>
<i>Achillea ptarmica</i>	Sneezewort
<i>Agrimonia eupatoria</i>	Agrimony
<i>Agrostemma githago</i>	Corncockle
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	Common Bent
<i>Alopecurus myosuroides</i>	Black Grass
<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>	Meadow Foxtail
<i>Anagallis arvensis</i>	Scarlet Pimpernel
<i>Anthemis austriaca</i>	Austrian Chamomile
<i>Aphanes arvensis</i>	Parsley Piert
<i>Arenaria serpyllifolia</i>	Thyme-leaved Sandwort
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False Oat-grass
<i>Avena fatua</i>	Wild Oat
<i>Betonica officinalis</i>	Betony
<i>Bromus hordeaceus</i>	Soft Brome
<i>Carex spicata</i>	Spiked Sedge
<i>Centaurea cyanus</i>	Cornflower
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Common Mouse-ear
<i>Chenopodium album</i>	Fat Hen
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping Thistle
<i>Cirsium palustre</i>	Marsh Thistle
<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	Field Bindweed
<i>Convolvulus tricolor</i>	Tricoloured Convolvulus
<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>	Crested Dog's-tail
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cocksfoot
<i>Dactylorhiza fuchsii</i>	Common Spotted Orchid
<i>Elytrigia repens</i>	Common Couch





Agrimony

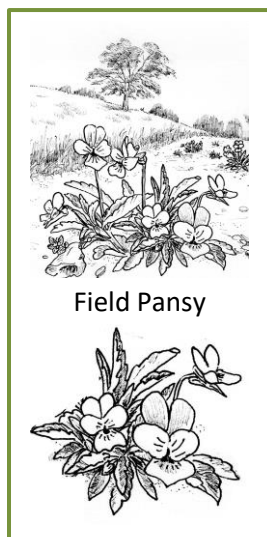


Meadow Vetchling



Rose sp.

<i>Eschscholtzia californica</i>	California Poppy
<i>Fagopyrum sp.</i>	Buckwheat
<i>Festuca rubra agg.</i>	Red Fescue
<i>Galium verum</i>	Lady's Bedstraw
<i>Geranium dissectum</i>	Cut-leaved Crane's-bill
<i>Gypsophila?</i>	
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog
<i>Hordeum secalinum</i>	Meadow Barley
<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Cat's-ear
<i>Iberis amara</i>	Wild Candytuft
<i>Juncus conglomeratus</i>	Compact Rush
<i>Lamium album</i>	White Dead-nettle
<i>Lapsana communis</i>	Nipplewort
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	Meadow Vetchling
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	Ox-eye Daisy
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial Ryegrass
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Bird's-foot-trefoil
<i>Matricaria discoidea</i>	Pineappleweed
<i>Myosotis arvensis</i>	Field Forget-me-not
<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	Common Poppy
<i>Phacelia tanacetifolia</i>	Fiddleneck
<i>Phleum bertolonii</i>	Smaller Cat's-tail
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain
<i>Plantago major</i>	Greater Plantain
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	Rough Meadow-grass
<i>Potentilla erecta</i>	Tormentil
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Selfheal
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow Buttercup
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup
<i>Raphanus raphanistrum</i>	Wild Radish
<i>Rosa arvensis</i>	Field Rose
<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	Bramble
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock
<i>Rumex sanguineus</i>	Wood Dock



<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder
<i>Sherardia arvensis</i>	Field Madder
<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>	Hedge Woundwort
<i>Stellaria graminea</i>	Lesser Stitchwort
<i>Trifolium campestre</i>	Hop Trefoil
<i>Trifolium dubium</i>	Lesser Trefoil
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White Clover
<i>Tripleurospermum inodorum</i>	Scentless Mayweed
<i>Trisetum flavescens</i>	Yellow Oat-grass
<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	Germander Speedwell
<i>Veronica persica</i>	Common Field Speedwell
<i>Vicia tetrasperma</i>	Smooth Tare
<i>Viola arvensis</i>	Field Pansy

## ELLENBROOK FIELDS

**Saturday 17 July**

8 members

*This site was bought in 1930 by Geoffrey de Havilland, he moved in his De Havilland Aircraft Company from Stag Lane, North London. Geoffrey de Havilland was a keen entomologist and named his aircraft after moths. For further information on Hatfield Aerodrome Heritage Trail go to [ahaetsa.org.uk](http://ahaetsa.org.uk).*

*This site is good for passage migrants such as Ring Ouzel, Wheatears and Stonechats. In the evening Barn Owls have been seen quartering the meadows. There are Barn Owl boxes on site which used to be monitored by Barry Trevis warden of Lemsford Springs. However, there are threats to the site from gravel extraction and housing development.*

We left Notcutts Garden Centre at Smallford and followed a footpath leading into Ellenbrook Fields and entered the hay meadow. There were lots of butterflies on the wing including Meadow Browns, Ringlets, Small Tortoiseshell, Comma, Marbled Whites, Skippers, Large and Small Whites,

Small Heath, Common Blue, a female Brimstone, Gatekeepers and Burnett Moths. At the start of the walk, it was 25°C.

In the meadow we found four Bee Orchids which had gone to seed.

We followed the footpath leading to Beech Farm. There was a mixed hedgerow of Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Field Maple and other shrubs. There were numerous anthills in the grassland where we saw a Pyramidal Orchid as well as Common Centaury and Red Bartsia among the plants. We turned right and walked parallel with the sand and gravel quarry which has a bank of willows, birch and scrub, as well as a reedbed fringing the edge of the fields. Earlier in the year Grasshopper Warblers were heard 'reeling' (HNHS website).

We headed into Homecovert Wood to find some shade from the heat as it reached 30°C. We stopped for lunch by the pond in the wood, sitting on a fallen tree. We watched a Wren darting from a nest hole on a Hornbeam, searching for insects.

Feeling refreshed, we headed out of the wood past an earthbank which had an old Hornbeam hedge along it. We walked along a path edged by Lady's Bedstraw and Wild Carrot. We entered a grassy patch and scrub where the Longhorn Cattle had explored. Here we found Marsh Woundwort in flower. We walked into the second hay meadow where we saw Brown Hawker and Emperor Dragonflies, Azure Damselflies and Common Blue Damselflies in the vegetation.

Walking past the Ellenbrook, we saw Meadow Crane's-bill, as well as Field Scabious and Teasel covering the grassland. Along the aircraft taxi road, we spotted Crow Garlic on the bank. Peter found a rove beetle which arched its tail making you think of a Devil's Coachman.



**Bird List:**

Blackbirds, Great Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Buzzards, Skylarks, Bullfinch (heard), Linnets, Song Thrush, Chiffchaff, Swallows, Swifts, Robin, Wren, Jay, Magpie, Stock Dove, Wood Pigeons,

*Rose and David Seabrook*

## CHARLTON, NEAR HITCHIN

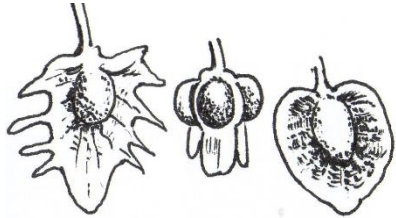
Saturday 31 July

8 members

We met at Charlton on a cloudy summer's day where rain threatened most of the day but only came down for a few minutes intermittently and the sun broke through occasionally. The route started at a small ford over the River Hiz and passed through damp pastures by the side of the Hiz heading upstream. We then entered arable fields above the source of the Hiz, along a short section of road before swinging left by Target Plantation with chalky soil evident. After that we continued back towards Charlton along field edges.

At the start of the route is a small piggery where William found both Swinecress and Lesser Swinecress and I was introduced to the concept of "plasticity" in plants, relating to the significant variation in the leaf shape and form that can occur in the goosefoot and orache families making identification tricky.

The first field was a damp meadow usually grazed by horses. Here we had to try and avoid stepping on froglets and I had the differences between Broad-leaved, Curled and Clustered Dock demonstrated by Alla:



a close look at the tiny seeds shows a triangular symmetry with spiky appendages (Broad-leaved), always three warts (Clustered) and often one wart (Curled). Also, Alla removed the case from a Hawthorn berry showing the single stone, meaning it was the common Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and not Midland Hawthorn *Crataegus laevigata*. Roaming around the meadow the umbellifers, with their simple flowers, were attracting a wide range of flies, wasps and hoverflies with overcast conditions meaning the insects were not too flighty. Charismatic species admired included: Beewolf Wasp *Philanthus triangulum* (see photo below); hoverflies mimicking hornets and bumblebees *Volucella zonaria* and *Eristalis intricarius*; Azure and Blue-tailed Damselflies *Coenagrion puella* and *Ischnura elegans*; Oak Bush-cricket and Roesel's Bush-cricket *Meconema thalassinum* and *Metrioptera roeselii*; a metallic looking gravid female Green Dock Beetle *Gastrophysa viridula* and the wasp-mimic fly *Conops quadrifasciatus*.



The next field was arable with just enough verge for lunch with Swallows darting around. A short length of road had a selection of butterflies and a lovely Dusky Sallow moth. Turning the corner, a short incline led to a field edge which was the highlight of the day (although I have been past it many a time without knowing it was so good). Here a considerable time was spent inspecting a selection of chalk specialist plants including Venus's-looking-glass *Legousia hybrida*, a Gentian (yet to flower), Fairy Flax *Linum catharticum*, Dwarf Thistle *Cirsium acaule* and Salad Burnet *Poterium sanguisorba*. There were many holes in the field edge, presumed to be of mining bees and William suggested the beech wood by the field would be worthy of investigation at a future date.

The walk continued to a small meadow with little of note except for a fresh Small Copper butterfly and several Six-spot Burnet moths. A small amount of Red Bartsia (*Odontites vernus*) failed to produce the hoped-for Red Bartsia Bee *Melitta tricincta*. Returning to the field edge and heading back towards Charlton produced several plants typical of arable land including White Mustard *Sinapis alba*, Sharp-leaved Fluellen *Kickxia elatine* and Chicory *Cichorium intybus*. Paula encouraged me to look with a lens at the tiny yellow sticky hairs covering Perennial Sowthistle *Sonchus arvensis* – see photo of sepals.





The final field was modern looking pasture but held Common Broomrape (*Orobanche minor*) taking advantage of the lush White Clover, and again this field failed to produce the other hoped-for bee the Clover Melitta *Melitta leporina* but further on Common Cudweed *Filago vulgaris* was found at the field edge.

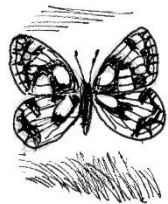
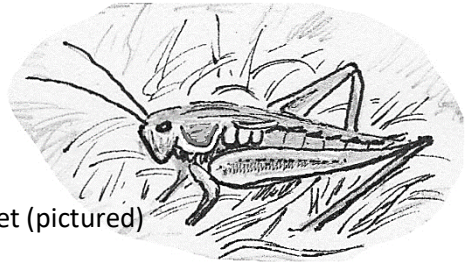
I suspect that a measure of success for a field meeting is how slow the party travelled: we took nearly seven hours to do 2 miles and I guess that counts as a 'win' for my first meeting as leader?

**Birds:** Green Woodpecker, Goldfinch, Greenfinch, Grey Heron, Blackbird, Wood Pigeon, Stock Dove, Starling Jackdaw, House Martin, Swallow, Moorhen, Yellowhammer, Buzzard, Kestrel

**Mammals:** Fallow Deer, Grey Squirrel

**Amphibian:** Common Frog

**Crickets:** Oak Bush-cricket,  
Dark Bush-cricket, Roesel's Bush-cricket (pictured)



**Damselflies:** Azure, Blue-Tailed

**Butterflies and Moths:** Small Copper, Holly Blue, Gatekeeper, Marbled White, Green-veined White, Essex Skipper, Large Skipper, Small Tortoiseshell, Red Admiral

Common Carpet, Dusky Sallow, Six-spot Burnet, Plume Moth, Brimstone Moth

**Flies:** *Conops quadrfaciatus*, *Clytiomya continua*



**Hoverflies:** *Volucella zonaria*, *Helophilus pendulus* (above), *Eristalis intricarius*

**Beetles:** *Gastrophysa viridula*, *Rhagonycha fulva*, 7-spot Ladybird, 14-spot Ladybird, 16-spot Ladybird, Swollen Thigh Beetle, *Rhinusa antirrhini*

**Wasps:** Beewolf, *Symmorphus bifasciatus*

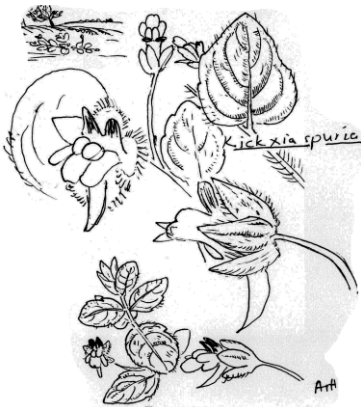
**Bees:** Red-tailed Bumblebee, Honey Bee



# FLOWERING PLANTS



Venus's Looking Glass and  
Small Toadflax



Round-leaved Fluellen

<i>Aethusa cynapium</i>	Fools Parsley
<i>Aphanes arvensis</i>	Parsley-piert
<i>Briza media</i>	Quaking Grass
<i>Bryonia dioica</i>	White Bryony
<i>Campanula rotundifolia</i>	Harebell
<i>Carex flacca</i>	Glaucous Sedge
<i>Chelidonium majus</i>	Greater Celandine
<i>Chaenorhinum minus</i>	Small Toadflax
<i>Cichorium intybus</i>	Chicory
<i>Cirsium acaule</i>	Dwarf Thistle
<i>Clinopodium vulgare</i>	Wild Basil
<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>	Field Bindweed
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn
<i>Daphne laureola</i>	Spurge Laurel
<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>	Teasel
<i>Euphorbia exigua</i>	Dwarf Spurge
<i>Filago vulgaris</i>	Common Cudweed
<i>Kickxia spuria</i>	Round-leaved Fluellen
<i>Knautia arvensis</i>	Field Scabious
<i>Legousia hybrida</i>	Venus's-looking-glass
<i>Lepidium didymium</i>	Lesser Swine-cress
<i>Lepidium coronopus</i>	Swinecress
<i>Linum catharticum</i>	Fairy Flax
<i>Linaria vulgaris</i>	Common Toadflax
<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	Purple Loosestrife
<i>Malva neglecta</i>	Dwarf Mallow
<i>Myosoton aquaticum</i>	Water Chickweed
<i>Odontites vernus</i>	Red Bartsia
<i>Origanum vulgare</i>	Marjoram
<i>Orobanche minor</i>	Common Broomrape
<i>Persicaria maculosa</i>	Redshank
<i>Polygonum aviculare</i>	Knotgrass
<i>Poterium sanguisorba</i>	Salad Burnett
<i>Rumex conglomeratus</i>	Clustered Dock
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad-leaved Dock
<i>Rumex crispus</i>	Curled Dock
<i>Silene vulgaris</i>	Bladder Campion
<i>Sinapis arvensis</i>	Charlock
<i>Sonchus arvensis</i>	Perennial Sowthistle
<i>Tragopogon pratensis</i>	Goat's-beard
<i>Viola arvensis</i>	Field Pansy

## PARK WOOD, BRAMFIELD

Saturday 14 August

12 Members

The weather for the day started cloudy and breezy but was warm. Once we set off there was more shelter and by the afternoon the day had periods of sunshine that made it good for insects.

I started by showing the group the beetle *Prionychus ater*, a Tenebrionid that is local and feeds on black wood mould. This one had come to my moth trap the night before.

From the village hall car park in Bramfield we set off towards Bramfieldbury, down Bury Lane. Down the lane a Jersey Tiger *Euplagia quadripunctaria* was spotted and after a poke it flew displaying the bright red underwing. Paula spotted the lichen *Cliostomum griffithii* on an ash trunk and Peter found a Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta* caterpillar in a nettle leaf. Wood Spurge *Euphorbia amygdaloides* and Upright Hedge-parsley *Torilis japonica* were seen in the wood edge. Jean was helping by keeping a plants-in-flower list. At the end of the lane, we took the footpath that loops around the southern border of Park Wood. In the first field we saw a perched Southern Hawker *Aeshna mixta* and on a large oak several Purple Hairstreak *Favonius quercus* butterflies could be seen flying around the canopy. One hairstreak eventually came down to the ground. A Red Admiral also came down to sun on the path; it turned into a good day for butterflies. More insects were spotted rapidly at this spot – Straw Dot *Rivula sericealis*, Common Carpet *Epirrhoe alternata*, Dark Bush-cricket *Pholidoptera griseoaptera* and Roesel's Bush-cricket *Metrioptera roeselii*. Rounding the bottom of the wood there was a rather lovely view across the fields and woods to the south. The hedgerow here was very good with a range of plants along the edge. Butterflies of several species were watched along the hedge – Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, Small Tortoiseshell, Small White, Peacock and Speckled Wood. On the crop edge Rose found a very fine colony of both Round-leaved Fluellen *Kickxia spuria* and Sharp-leaved Fluellen *K. elatine*. On the leaves of the Round-leaved I saw lots of leaf mines which I was later able to establish are caused by an Agromyzid fly *Liriomyza bryoniae*. The fungus *Bolbitius titubans* (previously *B. vitellinus*) was found on old dead grass. Passing through a section of the wood, by the edge we saw lots of Stone Parsley *Sison amomum* which at first

confused us but eventually we established its identity. Further butterflies were seen here. Comma and Holly Blue, then one was spotted nectaring that was faded but interesting. It was a Fritillary species, and we spent some time trying to work out its identity, the conclusion being possibly Dark-green but photos later showed it to be a Silver-washed *Argynnis paphia*. Wendy was looking for a beetle to photograph for her FSC course and I found an *Abax parallelepipedus* under a log; we later discovered a lot more good beetles.

We turned along the path that crosses through Park Wood parallel to its northern edge. Nectaring on flowers Simon found us two Tachinid flies *Estheria cristatus* and *Phasia hemiptera*, these are parasitic flies. We had lunch by the ride and a big hairy caterpillar crossed the track (from photo later identified as a White Ermine *Spilosoma lubricipeda*). Simon found a very interesting beetle on an umbel here, *Variimorda villosa*, a Mordellid or Tumbling Flower Beetle; this is a good find and a local beetle. Moving on we came to a large ride that was not on the map as a path but had a permissive footpath sign so diverted of down it, losing Claudi and Chris who took the marked footpath. This turned out to be a wonderful track for plants and insects. Three types of Longhorn Beetles were seen - Black-and-yellow *Rutpela maculata*, Red *Stictoleptura rubra* and Large Black *Stictoleptura scutellata*. Always impressive beetles and nice to see. A Common Darter female *Sympetrum striolatum* was resting on a bramble. More Silver-washed Fritillaries were flying, and Peter saw Small Heath. There were some nice plants along this ride and in a small logging area. The attractive hoverfly *Chrysotoxum verralli* was found by Simon, it was sunning on a leaf. Further down the track Simon also found the very spectacular Soldierfly *Stratiomys potamida*, Banded General; this is locally common and was nectaring on Angelica. Several wasps on plants were seen by Chris and Simon that turned out to be the Saxon Wasps *Dolichovespula saxonica*. In a patch of brambles, I saw some Montbretia *Crocasmia x crocosmiiflora* in flower, very pretty but inclined to become invasive. Back to the Bury Lane, the track from the village we had started down, we made our way back to the car park. Here after all saying farewell we headed for home.

Jean tells me we saw 100 plants in flower during the walk.

I had originally intended a longer walk that included Bramfield Woods too, but we never made it that far. There was too much to distract us, but we are a natural history group so that is rather positive, I think.

Special thanks to Simon for his keen eyes and immense knowledge in finding us so many good insects. For me it was a splendid day with many good things, and I hope everyone enjoyed it as much as I did. Thank you for your company.



*William Bishop*

**Bird List** – Goldfinch, House sparrow, Yellowhammer, Nuthatch, Great Tit, Wood Pigeon, Carrion Crow, Magpie, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Buzzard, Chiffchaff, Wren.

**Butterflies** – Red Admiral, Purple Hairstreak, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, Small Tortoiseshell, Small White, Peacock, Speckled Wood, Silver-washed Fritillary, Comma, Holly Blue, Small Heath.

**Fungi** (Claudi and Chris) –

*Agaricus campestris*, Field Mushroom, on grass in playing field  
*Bolbitius titubans* (= *B. vitellinus*), Yellow Fielcap, on grassy area beside path  
*Coprinopsis lagopus*, Hare's Foot Inkcap, on wood chips  
*Erysiphe alphitoides*, Oak Powdery Mildew, on living oak leaves  
*Gymnopus peronatus* (= *Collybia peronata*), Wood Woollyfoot, on wood chips  
*Hypoxylon fragiforme*, Beech Woodward, on fallen beech tree  
*Lactarius tabidus*, Birch Milkcap, on soil under birch  
*Megacollybia platyphylla*, Whitelaced Shank, on buried wood  
*Melampsora caprearum*, a Rust, on living goat willow leaves  
*Paxillus involutus*, Brown Rollrim, on buried wood  
*Piptoporus betulinus*, Birch Polypore, on dead standing birch  
*Pluteus cervinus*, Deer Shield, on decayed wood  
*Pluteus phlebophorus*, Wrinkled Shield, on decayed wood  
*Russula densifolia*, Crowded Brittlegill, on soil under deciduous trees  
*Russula heterophylla*, Greasy Green Brittlegill, on soil, under deciduous trees  
*Stereum hirsutum*, Hairy Curtain Crust, on dead wood  
*Stropharia semiglobata*, Dung Roundhead, on grassy area beside path  
*Xerula radicata*, Rooting Shank, on buried wood



## ICKLEFORD

**Saturday 28 August**

Eleven people gathered in Ickleford on a cloudy, dry day and set off towards the river Hiz.

Our first view of the river was where HMWT and Friends of the River Hiz had recently done some structural work to encourage the river to meander and slow it down. It is one of Hertfordshire's treasured chalk streams and the local community take its management very seriously. It is home to several otters, and though we didn't see one on our walk, one of our members, Phil Barron, had sent me a video of one taken earlier in June by Bruce Parker who owns the adjoining land. The otters are not greeted with enthusiasm by all local residents as they sporadically raid their ponds for precious carp and such like! In my personal view, it is small price to pay for re-creating a habitat that supports such a prized mammal.

Hornet Hoverflies *Volucella zonaria* were spotted by William. Designed to mimic its namesake it is our largest hoverfly, and can be distinguished from the hornet by its much larger eyes, broader body and, thankfully for us humans, the lack of a sting. Later on in the day we caught up with a Batman Hoverfly, this one having distinct dark grey markings on the thorax, often likened to the Batman logo, hence its common name!

The land bordering the river and the railway is being managed by the landowner for wildlife, the plants being allowed to grow through the summer season with a cut in September, so we arrived at its most floriferous. I collected a list of over 100 plants in flower throughout the walk. Species by the river included Water Chickweed *Myosoton aquaticum*, Angelica *Angelica sylvestris* and Water Mint *Mentha aquatica*. The meadow revealed flowers too numerous to list here, but included; Chicory *Cichorium intybus*, Common Knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, Silverweed *Potentilla anserina*, Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, Ribbed Melilot *Melilotus officinalis*, Field Scabious *Knautia arvensis*, Meadow Vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis*, Tufted Vetch *Vicia cracca*

Common Restharrow *Ononis repens*, Common Toadflax *Linaria vulgaris*, Agrimony *Agrimonia eupatoria* and Hoary Ragwort *Jacobaea erucifolius*.

Amongst the long grasses we came across a beautiful example of the Wasp Spider *Argiope bruennichi* showing striking yellow and black markings on its abdomen, and as the morning wore on, we saw several more, so clearly the conditions suited them. We came across a variety of ladybirds: 16,22,24-spot and of course the 7-spot Ladybird.

After finding a gorgeous stand of Meadow Crane's-bill *Geranium pratense* under the railway line we retraced our steps, and stopped for lunch, settling on some fallen tree trunks. By then the clouds had dispersed and the sun shone, encouraging a little group of young Common Lizards *Zootoca vivipara* that appeared from under the bark to soak up the heat. Alison spotted an unusual beetle, which turned out to be the Four Banded Longhorn Beetle *Leptura quadrifasciata*, very rare in Hertfordshire, with only 4 records since 1984 in Trevor James book '*The Beetles of Hertfordshire*'. A very exciting find for the group, especially William.

After lunch we made our way towards Ickleford Common via grazing pasture land near the edge of the Hitchin Lavender Centre, and came out just before the old railway bridge. Near the water alongside the road bridge, we came across Orange Balsam *Impatiens capensis*, Reed Sweet-grass *Glyceria maxima* and a group of pretty Gallant Soldier plants *Galinsoga parviflora*.

As the weather warmed our butterfly count increased. We saw Speckled Wood *Pararge aegeria*, Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*, Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae* and a Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus* which landed on Rose's forehead! We stopped to admire the stunning iridescent colouring on a Mint Beetle *Chrysolina coerulans*.

Reaching Ickleford Common, we remarked at how degraded the grassland seemed, probably as a result of the sheep population in residence. The river, however was a refreshing treat to see.

Banded Demoiselle *Calopteryx splendens*: Common and Ruddy Darters *Sympetrum striolatum* and *S. sanguineum*: Common and Brown Hawkers *Aeshna juncea* and *A. grandis* roamed the river banks.



We returned by road and track to the centre of Ickleford village, having enjoyed a day of fascinating and prolific late summer wildlife.

**Andy Holtham gathered an impressive list of galls:**

<b>Gall causer</b>	<b>Host</b>	<b>English name</b>
<i>Andricus curvator</i>	<i>Quercus robur</i>	-
<i>Neuroterus quercusbaccarum</i>	<i>Quercus robur</i>	Common spangle gall
<i>Neuroterus numismalis</i>	<i>Quercus robur</i>	Silk button gall
<i>Andricus quercuscalicis</i>	<i>Quercus robur</i>	Knopper gall
<i>Andricus foecundatrix</i>	<i>Quercus robur</i>	Artichoke gall
<i>Diplolepis rosae</i>	<i>Rosa canina</i>	Robin's pin cushion
<i>Psyllopsis fraxini</i>	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	-
<i>Trichohermes walkeri</i>	<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i>	-
<i>Pemphigus spyrothecae</i>	<i>Populus spp.</i>	-
<i>Taphrina populina</i>	<i>Populus spp.</i>	-
<i>Pemphigus populinigrae/phenax/gairi</i>	<i>Populus spp.</i>	(Can only be separated by examining the aphids)

**William gave us a list of birds and moths:**



**Birds-** Goldfinch, Carrion Crow, Great Tit, Kestrel, Wood Pigeon, House Sparrow, Wren, Magpie, Canada Goose, Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Blackcap, Blue Tit, Long-tailed Tit, Chiffchaff, Red Kite, Collared Dove, Blackbird, Jay, Moorhen, Swallow and Buzzard,

**Moths** – Straw Dot, Common Plume, *Cochylis molliculana*, Square-spot Rustic, Yellow Shell, Common Grass-veneer and Six-striped Rustic.

*Ruth Graham*

## WALLINGTON NEAR BALDOCK

Saturday 11 September

14 members & 1 guest

The weather at the start looked promising for our walk around the open landscape of north Hertfordshire and it continued to be a lovely sunny day.

From our parking place near Wallington church, we set off southwards along the green lane towards Wallington Common. The lane was bordered by mature oak and ash trees with hazel and hawthorn beneath and there was soon an opportunity to pause and check out a game crop in an adjacent field for birds. Along with Blue Tits and Goldfinches, we also spotted (!) a Spotted Flycatcher flitting in and out of a bushy perch in its quest for small flies.

We then turned west along the Hertfordshire Way with a crop field on our left and good wide hedges /belts of mature trees on our right. The farmer had left us a wide grassy path to walk along and this meant there was some nice mixed vegetation to look at. We found lots of Dark-bush Crickets *Pholidoptera griseoaptera* and Roesel's Bush-crickets *Metrioptera roeselii* on brambles. A wide sown field margin slowed everyone up to look for stray arable weeds, insects in general and anything else that caught our eyes. The margin contained a nice mix of Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, Bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, Bristly Oxtongue *Helminthotheca echinoides* and White Clover *Trifolium repens*. There were also some goosefoots and Jean & Julie spent some time trying to work out what they were.

*Jean Williamson and  
Julie Wise looking  
closely  
at an Orache plant!  
Photo: Michael  
Demidecki*



No late butterflies here but many Hoverflies – mostly, we thought, the common Marmalade variety *Episyrphus balteatus*. Simon will probably have recorded others!

After a bit of chivvying, we all eventually made it as far as Bush Spring after less than half a mile along the field edge. Although small in size, Bush Spring is a lovely wooded area, with hazel as its coppiced underlayer with oak and ash overhead. Some coppicing had been done fairly recently which meant that there were several open and sunny areas. There were large clumps of Tufted Hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa* and some Wood Avens *Geum urbanum* still in flower. Claudi kept his eyes open for fungi and we added Treecreeper and Nuthatch to the bird list.

There was another wide sown margin along the edge of Clothallbury Wood, so progress was slow here while we found Round-leaved and Sharp-leaved Fluellen *Kickxia spuria* & *K. elatine*, Field Pansy *Viola arvensis*, Scarlet Pimpernel *Anagallis arvensis* and best of all, several clumps of Corn Mint *Mentha arvensis*. Sadly, the wood was effectively bounded by a deep ditch and thick hedge so there was no scope for harmless trespassing to find other fungi!

William did some more chivvying and we set off briskly, altogether, across a large, harvested arable field towards Quickswood Farm, where we turned left along a nettly path that took us to a lane. After a few yards along the lane, we found an excellent location for lunch. Some large logs provided seating and the open landscape gave us wide views down towards Baldock and across to where the Greensand Ridge rises in Bedfordshire. (It wouldn't have been as good if it had been raining!) The only small complaint was that someone had been there before us and left their rubbish behind – but Julie set to and gathered it all up in a spare carrier bag.

Our lunch spot marked the crossing of the Icknield Way Path, which traverses the chalk from Ivinghoe Beacon to just east of Thetford, but we were following it only as far as Wallington. On a good day, the rest of our walk is a particularly fine one with wonderful views to the north and west across 'Champion Country'. As usual, and especially in early autumn, the countryside seemed to go quiet after lunch (possibly true of some of us also!) and there were very few birds of note, even when we reached a somewhat

scruffy area of trees, scrub, an old barn and a pile of junk. Claudi recorded Tar Spot *Rhytisma acerinum* fungus here on sycamore trees but not a lot else and we continued on towards Wallington.

The next section of our route was along a very pleasant grassed track with grassy margins each side. On a previous walk along here, William had found a lively Harvest Mouse but there were no signs of nests on this walk. We did, however, find several plants of Venus'-looking-glass *Legousia hybrida* and some clumps of Field Scabious *Knautia arvensis*.

Conditions for walking were perfect: warm sunshine with a fresh breeze, great views, a good track free of mud, wide blue skies with fluffy clouds and convivial company. What more could you want on a country walk?

We entered Wallington village after a short stretch along the road and then turned right along a narrow path fenced on each side which took us back to the parish church and our parking places.

Chris James

### **Birds (recorded by William Bishop):**

Red Kite, Buzzard, Hobby, Kestrel, Pheasant, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Wood Pigeon, Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Pied Wagtail, Blackcap, Chiffchaff, Spotted Flycatcher, Robin, Blackbird, Long-tailed Tit, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Nuthatch, Wren, Yellowhammer, Goldfinch, Jackdaw, Carrion Crow.

### **Insects recorded by Simon Knot:**

**Hoverflies:** *Eristalis tenax*, *Eristalis pertinax*, *Sphaerophoria scripta*, *Syrirta pipiens* & *Syrphus ribesii*

**Other Flies:** *Tachina fera*

**Moths:** Common Marbled Carpet, Common Wainscot & Nettle-tap

**Dragonfly:** Southern Hawker



### **Flowering Plants (Recorded by Alla Mashanova)**

Alla recorded an impressive list of plants including 84 in flower. These reflected the variety of habitats passed through. Some, such as Greater Knapweed *Centaurea scabiosa*, Wild Carrot *Daucus carota* and Nettle-leaved Bellflower *Campanula trachelium*, reflected the closeness of chalk to the surface, others of more neutral established grassland such as Common Bent *Agrostis capillaris* and Tufted Vetch *Vicia cracca*. There was also an interesting representation of arable weeds including

Venus's Looking-glass *Legousia hybrida* and Corn Mint *Mentha arvensis* (the latter often associated with woodland edges and rides where there is some disturbance. Species list from Alla - unfortunately, there is not space here to reproduce it here in full.

**Fungi (recorded by Claudi Soler):**

Jelly Ear *Auricularia auricula-judae* on elder; King Alfred's Cakes *Daldinia concentrica* on ash; Common Tar Crust *Diatrype stigma* on deciduous dead wood; Oak Powdery Mildew *Erysiphe alphitoides* on living oak leaves; Hazel Woodward *Hypoxylon fuscum* on dead hazel; Shaggy Bracket

*Inonotus hispidus* on ash; Deceiver *Laccaria laccata* on soil/grass; Weeping Widow *Lacrymaria lacrymabunda* on soil/grass; Collared Parachute *Marasmius rotula* on leaf litter; a Rust *Melampsora caprearum* on living Goat Willow leaves; Common Bonnet *Mycena galericulata* on deciduous dead wood; *Perenniporia fraxinea*, a bracket at the base of a large Ash; Sycamore Tar Spot *Rhytisma acerinum* on Sycamore leaves; Felted Twiglet *Tubaria conspersa* on hazel.

*Perenniporia fraxinea*  
– a large bracket  
at the base of an ash  
tree.

Photo: Claudi Soler



The spores of  
*Perenniporia fraxinea*  
as seen at high  
magnification through  
the microscope.

Photo: Claudi Soler



## STANSTEAD ABBOTTS AND RYE MEADS

Saturday 25 September

9 Members & a Guest

We met in the car park to Stanstead Innings in Stanstead Abbotts. The weather for the day was grey but it was warm.

After watching a Great Spotted Woodpecker, we set off towards the Sailing Club Lake. Here we turned East and spent a bit of time scanning the water and shore for birds. This turned up a range of the more usual suspects for this type of habitat. It was rather noticeable that there was a general lack of insects. Going on we reached the northeast corner of the lake and turned down the eastern side going south. Here in the mown grass a strange looking group of objects were seen emerging from the soil that on closer examination proved to be the spore bearing shoots of Giant Horsetail *Equisetum telmateia*. The tip of these shoots bears a strobilus, the spore producing bit. We made our way out onto Netherfield Lane, and I scanned the large old Lime tree in the field, this tree has had a family of Little Owls in it for several years but was so leafy I couldn't see them. In good weather they sit in the sun on the outer branches.

After passing under the A414, there is a small bit of bank that has some remnant flora, this must be left from the site when it was a gravel extraction area. Here there were plants of Blue Fleabane, Common Century, Common Mullein and Purple Toadflax, looking worn but still flowering. Rather sadly the area has become rather rank with nettles and brambles covering almost every square inch. A good example of a place that could do with a bulldozer through it to shake up the seed bank; I'm not convinced just leaving things undisturbed always works out best for plants. We spotted a few galls here on Stinging Nettle (*Dasineura urticae*, a gall midge) and Germander Speedwell (*Jaapiella veronicae*, another gall midge). Also on the nettles was a Snout Moth, very common at this time of year. We crossed the toll road and entered the meadow opposite. In the grass were several fungi, most of which were beyond our limited knowledge, but we found a pristine young Lawyer's Wig *Coprinus comatus* (much discussion about edibility or enjoyment thereof!) and a fine group Giant Puffballs *Calvatia gigantea* (more discussion about frying pans, butter and bacon!).

It was now 12:30 and I took a vote on lunching here. I had for the second time this year carefully put my lunch in my backpack and locked it in the boot of the car before setting off; I thought it prudent to warn the group that the day was fast approaching when I turn up without trousers. The consensus was that most would like to deviate from my route to Rye Meads, a short distance down the road, as it offered seats and toilets (and for me coffee and cake; what's not to like?). We headed to Rye Meads. Most went to the car park hide, except Jean who being an ex-teacher took her class (Peter) into the area marked School Parties only. In the centre I checked to find they only charge for parking, but entry was free, so after lunch we went into the reserve.

The Draper Hide gave us some nice views of several birds. Little Grebes, Egyptian geese, Red-crested Pochard, Lapwing, Common Snipe were all seen, plus commoner wetland birds. Next, we visited the Gadwall Hide, here the water was very high, so the islands were all covered. There were a lot of Mute Swans on the water, with several cygnets. Lastly, we went to the Kingfisher Hide. This has been rebuilt and is a rather fine new building. There is a board on the wall in the entrance with the names of those the hide is dedicated to and some of the sponsors. On the list was the Kiln Trust (Robert Kiln Charitable Trust) and it was especially nice to see this as Steve was with us, this was his father's trust that Steve was part of. They have over the years made donations to many good causes. The Trust continues today under the name of the Kiln Family Trust (you can look them up on the web).

We left the RSPB reserve via the turnstile gate onto the HMWT reserve section. From here we made our way up to another A414 underpass and through to the bottom of the west side of the Sailing Club Lake. This took us back to the car park where we said goodbye and went home.

My thanks yet again to those who came, for your company and conversation.

*William Bishop*

### **Bird List-**

Great Spotted Woodpecker, Blue Tit, Robin, Chiffchaff, Jay, Wren, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Tufted Duck, Pochard, Great Crested Grebe, Moorhen, Coot, Cormorant, Black-headed Gull, Carrion Crow, Canada Goose, Cetti's Warbler, Great Tit, Magpie, Chaffinch, Goldfinch, Shoveler, Mute Swan, Gadwall, Little Grebe, Bullfinch, Ring-



necked Parakeet, Reed Warbler, Mallard, Teal, Stock Dove, Egyptian Goose, Lapwing, Snipe, Red-crested Pochard, Grey Heron, Starling.

**Gall List supplied by Andy Holtham:**

Gall causer

*Pontania proxima*

*Pontania proxima*

*Pontania bridgmanii*

*Jaapiella veronicae*

*Dasineura urticae*

*Rabdophaga rosaria*

Host

*Salix alba*

*Salix x fragilis*

*Salix caprea*

*Veronica chamaedrys*

*Urtica dioica*

*Salix caprea*

## **BAYFORDBURY**

**Saturday 9 October**

14 members

For me and a few other members, the day started with road closure/train cancellations and worries about getting to Bayfordbury in time. It was foggy when we assembled in the car park but started to clear up shortly afterwards. We had some lovely sunny spells during the day, although the ground remained wet throughout.

We set off through the grounds looking at crab apple trees (heritage from John Innes Centre), some of which did not look like apple trees at all – more like Hawthorns or even Cherries. Nevertheless, cutting a fruit provided evidence that they were tiny apples and not anything else. One of the Crabs had a large Mistletoe (*Viscum album*), and Simon commented that checking other potential hosts might bring more Mistletoe plants to light. Claudi was kept busy with fungi in the lawn – a collection of Yellow Fieldcaps *Bolbitius titubans*, Blackening Waxcap *Hygrocybe conica* and a miniature-Chinese-parasol-looking Pleated Inkcap *Parasola sp.* being the most prominent. We glanced over the lake, noticing mallard, coot, moorhen and a pair of shovelers. Simon showed us an Ivy Bee *Colletes hederæ* and explained that this is a non-native species feeding almost exclusively on Ivy, only recently appeared in the UK but now spreading fast.

We passed a ripening Grape-vine *Vitis vinifera* and looked at two unusual plants – Swallow-wort *Vincetoxicum*, presumably, *nigrum*, with its horn-like fruits and climbing Dutchman's Pipe *Aristolochia macrophylla* above it. Clare explained that the latter was grown in a glasshouse, which was in that place in the past. In the meantime, Simon spotted three species of *Eristalis* hoverflies – *E. tenax*, *E. pertinax* and *E. nemorum*, and Paula found oak leaves with Smooth spangle galls *Neuroterus albipes*. We then went to look at Birthwort (another *Aristolochiaceae* species), which has been spreading rapidly in the last few years. Small Scabious *Scabiosa columbaria* was dotted all over the grounds while I used to see it in just a few spots in an “average” year. We admired large leaves of Indian Bean Tree *Catalpa bignonioides* and strange-looking fruits of Osage Orange *Maclura pomifera*. The latter came with an addition in the form of a Batman Hoverfly *Myathropa florea* with yellow and black markings looking like a mask. Clare lifted one of the reptile mats revealing a mammal nest and an anthill. We passed mature Monterey Pine (*Pinus radiata*) with heavy cones and paused by the apiary where Simon commented on honeybees displacing native solitary bees.

We came to a small pond with a range of introduced species, unfortunately, including Parrot's feather *Myriophyllum aquaticum*. In summer, the pond is very popular with dragonflies using Bulrush *Typha latifolia* and Grey Club-rush *Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani* to perch, but there were no dragonflies seen on that day. At the edge, there was fox's poo with fruit in it, indicating autumn feeding preferences of this carnivore.

Finally, we strolled towards Pinetum. We paused to look at a Hawthorn covered with Mistletoe (spotted during an earlier walk) and climbed over the step to enter Sailor's Grove.

A mature Dawn Redwood *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* at the entrance to Pinetum was magnificent as always. Decaying logs had a range of fungi on them. Claudi showed us how margins of *Stereum subtomentosum* turn mildly yellow when scratched as opposed to *S. hirsutum*. We looked at Western Red-cedar (*Thuja plicata*) with distinct cones and discussed how to describe its characteristic smell (some books refer to it as “pineapple”). Decaying wood provided further fungi sightings, including a slime-mould *Lycogala terrestris*, Yellow Staghorn *Calocera viscosa* and Amethyst Deceiver *Laccaria amethystina*).

I aimed to reach the Fungal clock for lunch, but this proved not feasible. Instead, we sat for lunch in the central slopes with Monkey-puzzle *Araucaria araucana* behind us and Maidenhair Tree *Ginkgo biloba* in front of us. Willow Podocarp *Podocarpus salignus*, a conifer with weeping shoots and leaves looking pretty much like willow leaves, drew a lot of attention. Simon explored a nearby Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*) and showed us Dogwood grass aphids *Anoecia corni* and a leaf damaged by a Dogwood mining moth.

We proceeded along the path towards the chalk quarry at the back. A decaying oak stump covered with mosses and spiky-looking *Cladonia coniocraea* had an impressive Oak Mazegill bracket *Daedalea quercina*. We passed a few old Yews (*Taxus baccata*) and came to Lucombe Oak *Quercus x crenata*, which is a fertile hybrid between Turkey Q. *cerris* and Cork Q. *suber* oaks. Wendy found an acorn with a cup showing “mop-head” scales inherited from the Turkey Oak side.

The Fungal Clock did not disappoint us with fungi. Wrinkled Peach *Rhodotus palmatus*, Stinkhorn *Phallus impudicus*, Deer Shield *Pluteus cervinus* and Yellow Shield *P. chrysophlebius* were carefully examined. The sun came out, and with it came Comma, Speckled Wood, and two Red Admirals posing in the sunshine. Two Red Kites and a Buzzard circled above us. We passed the remains of Western Yellow-pine *Pinus ponderosa* fallen during the winter winds and walked towards Cyprus Cedar *Cedrus libanii* var. *brevifolia*. On a Rhododendron bush there, Simon spotted Rhododendron Leaf Hopper *Graphocephala fennahi* – a very colourful creature!

The south-eastern corner of Pinetum featured a veteran Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur*. Paula found two tiny lichens - *Cliostomum griffithii* and *Chaenotheca brachypoda* - on the Ash nearby, which were not seen during earlier visits. We passed the Leat covered with Duckweed *Lemna* sp., noticing a flowering Marjoram *Origanum vulgare* at the edge. Walking down through a row of Podocarps, we saw an Ivy with thick stems looking like a bush rather than a climber and a swarm of honeybees high in an Ash tree.

For me, it was another enjoyable day at Bayfordbury, with the number of species well over to what I could expect this time of year. Thanks to Simon

for birds and invertebrates, Claudi for the fungi list and everyone else for a wide range of species!

*Alla Mashanova*


**Birds:** Black-Headed Gull, Buzzard, Coal Tit, Coot, Crow, Dunnock, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Green Woodpecker, Jackdaw, Jay, Long-Tailed Tit, Magpie, Mallard, Mistle Thrush, Moorhen, Nuthatch, Pied Wagtail, Red Kite, Robin, Ring Necked Parakeet, Rook, Shoveler, Treecreeper, Woodpigeon




**Butterflies And Moths:** Comma, Red Admiral, Speckled Wood, Common Nettle-Tap (*Anthophila fabricana*)

**Beetles:** 7-spot Ladybird (*Coccinella septempunctata*)

**Other invertebrates:** *Anoecia corni*, *Apis mellifera*, *Colletes hederæ*, *Diplolepis rosæ*, *Eristalis nemorum*, *E. perinax*, *E. tenax*, *Eupeodes luniger*, *Graphocephala fennahi*, *Machimus atricapillus*, *Myathropa florea*, *Neuroterus albipes*.

29 plant species in flower: *Achillea millefolium*, *Agrimonia eupatoria*, *Bellis perennis*, *Calystegia sepium*, *Cirsium arvense*, *Clinopodium ascendens*, *Clinopodium vulgare*, *Crepis capillaris*, *Daucus carota*, *Erodium cicutarium*, *Geranium mole*, *Geranium robertianum*, *Helminthotheca echioides*, *Medicago lupulina*, *Melissa officinalis*, *Origanum vulgare*, *Poa annua*, *Prunella vulgaris*, *Rubus fruticosus* agg., *Scabiosa columbaria*, *Senecio erucifolius*, *Senecio jacobaea*, *Silene dioica*, *Sonchus oleraceus*, *Taraxacum* agg., *Teucrium scorodonia*, *Verbascum thapsus*, *Veronica persica*, *Viburnum tinus*.

Fungi, by Claudi Soler	Species	English name
	<i>Auricularia auricula-judae</i>	Jelly Ear
	<i>Bolbitius titubans</i> (= <i>B. vitellinus</i> )	Yellowing fieldcap
	<i>Boletus badius</i>	Bay Bolete
	<i>Calocera viscosa</i>	Yellow Stagshorn
	<i>Cortinarius</i> (Tel) <i>pseudofallax</i>	a Webcap
	<i>Daedalea quercina</i>	Oak Mazegill
	<i>Dendrothele acerina</i>	a Crust
	<i>Gymnopus dryophilus</i> (= <i>Collybia dryophila</i> )	Russet Toughshank

Fungi, by Claudi Soler	Species	English name
	<i>Hygrocybe conica</i>	Blackening Waxcap
	<i>Hyphodontia sambuci</i>	Elder Whitewash
	<i>Hypholoma fasciculare</i>	Sulphur Tuft
	<i>Inocybe geophylla</i>	White Fibrecap
	<i>Laccaria amethystina</i>	Amethyst Deceiver
	<i>Laccaria laccata</i>	Deceiver
	<i>Lactarius pubescens</i>	Bearded Milkcap
	<i>Leucoagaricus leucothites</i>	White Dapperling
	<i>Lycogala terrestre</i>	a Slime Mould
	<i>Lycoperdon molle</i>	Soft Puffball
	<i>Lycoperdon nigrescens</i>	Dusky Puffball
	<i>Lycoperdon perlatum</i>	Common Puffball
	<i>Mycena galericulata</i>	Common Bonnet
	<i>Mycena pura</i>	Lilac Bonnet
	<i>Mycena rosea</i>	Rosy Bonnet
	<i>Panaeolus sp.</i>	a Mottlegill
	<i>Parasola sp.</i>	a Pleated Inkcap
	<i>Phallus impudicus</i>	Stinkhorn
	<i>Pholiotina sp.</i>	
	<i>Piptoporus betulinus</i>	Birch Polypore
	<i>Pluteus cervinus</i>	Deer Shield
	<i>Pluteus chrysophlebius</i> (= <i>P. chrysophaeus</i> , <i>P. luteovirens</i> )	Yellow Shield
	<i>Postia tephroleuca</i>	Greying Bracket
	<i>Rhodotus palmatus</i>	Wrinkled Peach
	<i>Russula ochroleuca</i>	Ochre Brittlegill
	<i>Serpula himantioides</i>	a Dry Rot
	<i>Stereum subtomentosum</i>	Yellowing Curtain Crust
	<i>Stropharia caerulea</i>	Blue Roundhead
	<i>Tricholoma album</i>	White Knight
	<i>Tubifera ferruginea</i>	a Slime Mould



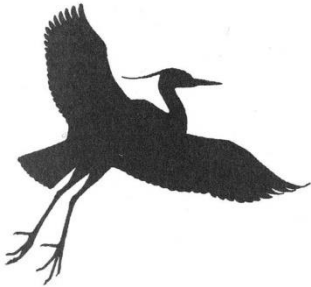
Ickleford - 28<sup>th</sup> August – what are they looking at?

*Photo: Alison Monckton*



Wallington – 11<sup>th</sup> September – a lunch break in glorious sunshine

*Photo: Chris James*



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