

NEWSLETTER 62

January 2020

Unearthing the "lost" spiders of Leicestershire



Psilochorus simoni

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In 2019, I recorded a total of 353 individual spiders representing 103 species, 29% of the VC55 list. Figure 2 (p. 3) shows where and when I recorded, roaming further afield in summer and sticking closer to home in winter. I managed to add one new species to the County list, *Enoplognatha latimana* (Cann, 2019), but I also unearthed a number of other "lost" species which between them had not been recorded for over 50 years.

Uloborus plumipes (p. 3, fig. 1), known as the Feather-legged Spider (from the Latin *pluma* "feather" and *pes* "foot"), or Garden Centre Spider, is a European species now widely distributed in greenhouses and garden centres worldwide. Believed to have been imported from The Netherlands on plants and first recorded in

cont'd on p. 3...

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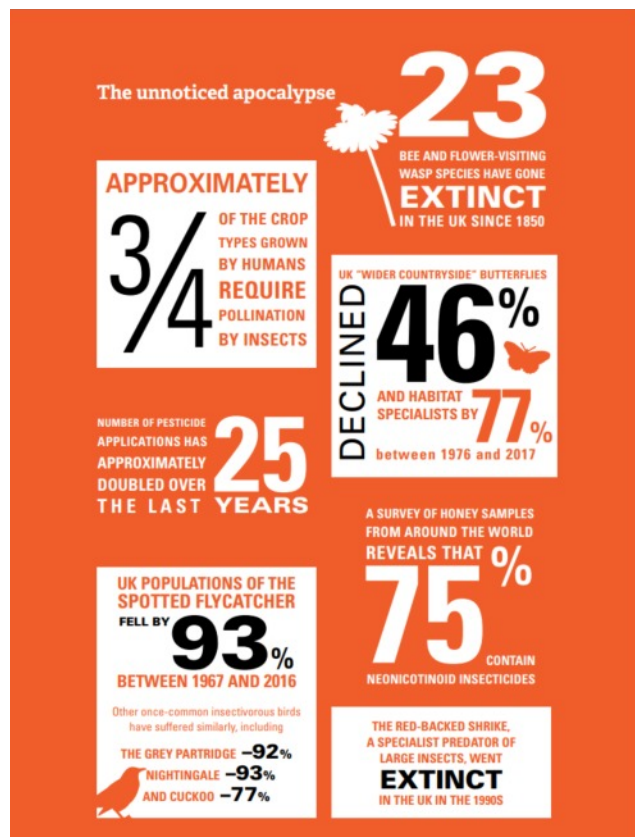
The editor will be happy to receive articles, short notes and photos (in focus please!) about insects or other invertebrates in Leicestershire and Rutland, also news of members' activities further afield. Photos to be sent separately please at high resolution. Unless otherwise credited, photos are by the author of the article.

Next Copy Deadline: 5 Sep 2020

Editorial

It is much harder to demonstrate the local extinction of a species than to add a new one to the county list. Every edition of this newsletter reports on a few further additions, pushing the grand total of invertebrate species ever higher. This does not show that our invertebrate life is thriving, of course - that is an illusion arising from that way we record wildlife. If we consider the *abundance* (numbers of individuals or biomass), then a very different picture emerges. I am old enough to remember the 1970s when car windscreens became splattered after a long journey in summer, and when my moth trap regularly attracted hundreds of insects. In recent years, scientific evidence has been collated that shows an alarming rate of decline, for example see Dave Goulson's report https://www.lrwt.org.uk/media/uploads/final_report_web_version.pdf A "poster" page from the report appears below.

I was delighted to learn from John Clarkson, the new Head of Conservation, that LRWT is supporting, along with other Wildlife Trusts, a new campaign called *Action for Insects*. The campaign highlights the problem, the causes and suggested solutions, some of which are applicable to our domestic and gardening activities.





"We are witnessing the largest extinction event on Earth since the dinosaurs"

Insects are dying out up to 8 times faster than larger animals and 41% of insect species face extinction.

This is a grave cause for concern - it impacts us all as well as wildlife. Insects pollinate three quarters of our food crops, as well as being the main food source for many birds, small mammals and fish.

Loss of their habitat and overuse of pesticides are two of the major causes of this looming catastrophe. **However, the good news is that it's not too late to act.**

Insect populations can recover, and we know what needs to be done to save them.

Why should we care?

Without insects many birds, bats, reptiles amphibians, small mammals and fish would die out as they would have nothing to eat.

87% of all plant species require animal pollination, most of it delivered by insects - that is pretty much all of them except grasses and conifers.

In addition, 3 out of 4 of all the crops that we grow require pollination by insects.

Only by working together can we address the causes of insect loss, halt and reverse them, and secure a sustainable future for insect life and for ourselves.

Together, we can stop this looming catastrophe and create an environment that is rich in nature for the benefit of wildlife and people.

These are a couple of extracts from the Trust's web site: <https://www.lrwt.org.uk/get-involved/actions-for-insects/>

Steve Woodward

cont'd from p.1

the UK in the 1990s, this species survives in greenhouses and buildings where the winter temperature is maintained above freezing (Jonsson, 1998). In this habitat it appears to play an effective role in controlling whitefly, but they are not commonly found in domestic houses. Although it is now widely distributed across the UK, they are cryptic and difficult to spot as they hang upside down motionless in their webs. Their horizontal webs and star-shaped egg sacs are much easier to find than the spiders themselves. Females grow up to 6 mm and appear to vastly outnumber males, but this may be because the 4 mm males are even more cryptic than the females. This species lacks venom glands and traps prey by entanglement in fuzzy, non-sticky cribellate silk.

Uloborus plumipes was first recorded in VC55 (Leicestershire and Rutland) in 2001, ironically in a garden centre only half a mile from my home. It was subsequently recorded at Brooksby Agricultural College near Melton Mowbray, in a now-defunct Leicester garden centre and finally in the plant section of a Homebase Superstore in 2006. The species has not been



Fig 1. *Uloborus plumipes*.

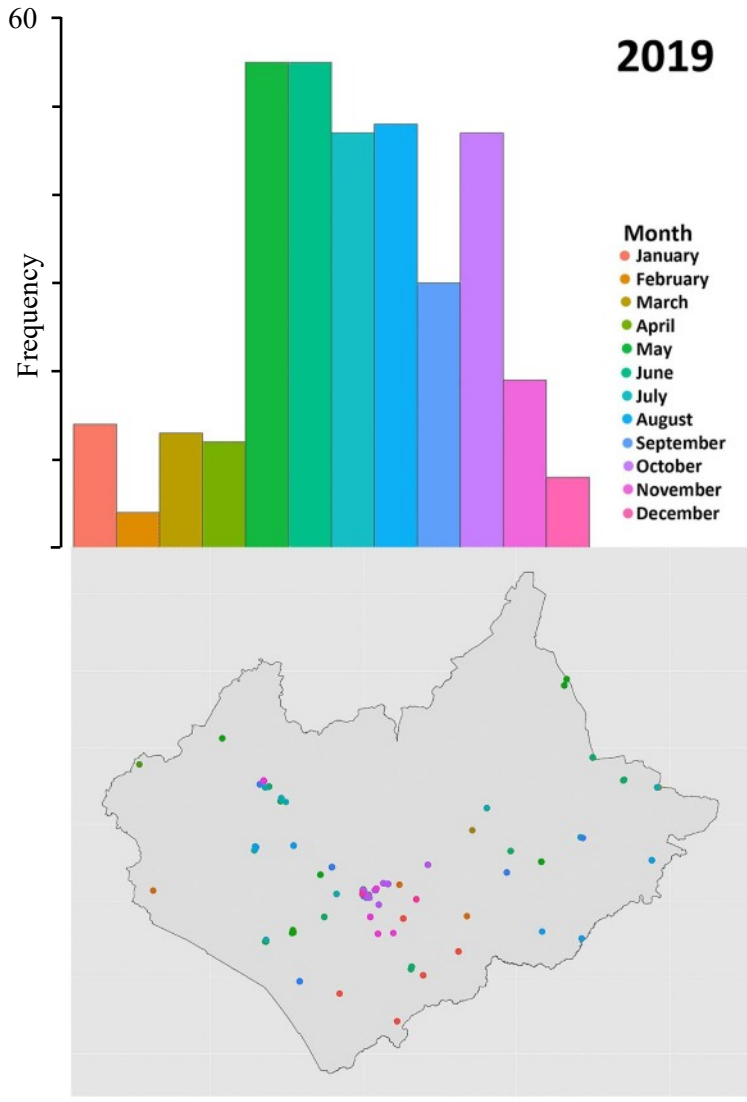


Fig 2. My spider records in 2019.

recorded in VC55 since that date, so, with half the roads and fields in the County underwater, I decided to go and do some fieldwork in warm garden centres. The logical place to start was the original location near my home. The only problem with that plan was that this garden centre no longer exists, having been replaced by a housing estate. However, before redevelopment, the owners moved the garden centre business to a new location in the County, so that was where I headed. It took me approximately three and a half minutes to find the first one, an adult female. Webs were very much in evidence and after a bit of searching, I also managed to find a juvenile. Home again within the hour!

One Sunday evening in November I walked into my kitchen, turned the light on and found ... something crawling across the worktop. At first I thought it was a tiny harvestman, but since that did not make any sense (it was late!), it had to be a spider looking like a harvestman. I presumed it must be *Pholcus phalangioides* but I popped it in a pot and went to bed. In the morning it turned out to be a male *Psilochorus simoni* (front cover), although it took me a while to convince myself of that. This species is thought to be of American origin, imported first into France and then into Britain on wine bottles. There are only two previous VC55 records, one from the wine cellar of Coleorton Hall in 1965. I would like to point out that my wine cellar consists of a few bottles from Sainsbury's in the understairs cupboard, and that alone is pretty good evidence that this species is increasing in frequency. The only reason we do not have more records is because it is so easily confused with *Pholcus phalangioides*.

Finally, I have been chasing *Philodromus albidus* (Fig. 3) for the last couple of years, certain that they are out there. VC55 is on the north west edge of their historical range, and there is only one previous record for the vice county. In May 1994 Jon Daws collected a specimen from Essendine Churchyard, just inside the county boundary, which John Crocker identified as *Philodromus rufus*. When Segers redescribed *P.*



Fig 3. *Philodromus albidus*.

albidus in 1989 (Segers, 1989), Jon Daws changed this record to *P. albidus*. In the last couple of years I have had a number of specimens from my own garden I was pretty sure were *P. albidus* but they were all immature and so this could not be confirmed. Taking advantage of the lousy weather for an end of year dash through my backlog of specimens, I was delighted to find not one but two adult female *Philodromus albidus* beaten from Oak at Narborough Bog on 28 June 2019. At last, proof that *P. albidus* is out there and that VC55 is a stop-over on the north westwards march of this species.

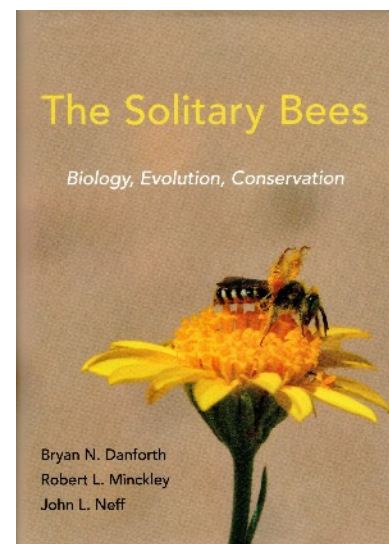
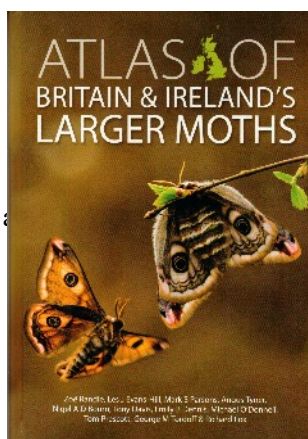
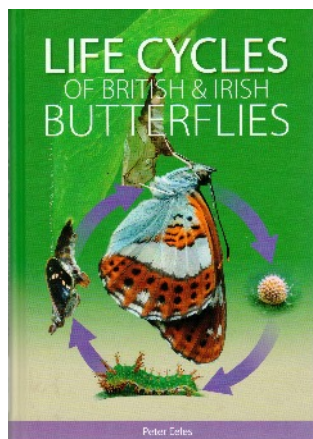
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- Segers, H. (1989) A redescription of *Philodromus albidus* Kulczynski, 1911 (Araneae, Philodromidae) *Bull. Br. Arachnol. Soc.* **8**(2): 38-40.

Alan Cann
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My groaning bookshelf

Three new books have been published that may be of interest, on butterflies, moths and solitary bees. If any member wishes to have look at my copy before sending off an order, please let me know before an indoor meeting.



Eeles, P. 2019. *Life cycles of British and Irish butterflies*. Pisces.

Where this book differs from other butterfly ID books, is that all stages are described and illustrated, including all larval instars. Coverage of 59 species takes 390 pages, which gives an idea of the detail included. There are abundant photographs, all of very good quality. As well as identification, the book covers habitat, distribution (with map) and status. A feature which I think is a waste of space is the montage of all life stages, and habitat, along with some ugly arrows (similar to the cover), that fronts every species account. That space would be more usefully devoted to an index.

Randle, Z., Evans-Hill, L.J, Parsons, M., Tyner, A., Bourn, N.A.D., Davis, T., Dennis, E.B., O'Donnell, M., Prescott, T., Tordoff, G.M. & Fox, R. 2019. *Atlas of Britain and Ireland's Larger Moths*. Pisces.

My earliest venture into natural history recording, from about 1970, was moths. I remember sending the recording card, with my annual summary, to John Heath at the BRC (then at Monks Wood), then later via our local Recorder Don Hall-Smith at Leicester Museum. I knew that my records were contributing to a national atlas, but I never imagined that it would take so long to appear!

The quantity of data summarised by the atlas is impressive: 275 years of recording, 25 million records of 893 species. For most species there are sufficient data to provide statistics on distribution change 1970-2016 and for 2000-2016. The number-crunching takes into account recording effort, which has improved dramatically since about 1995. Also presented is the abundance change 1970-2016, based on the

Rothamsted Insect Survey. I noticed that some of the change assessments disagree with those published in *The State of Britain's Larger Moths* reports (2006, 2013).

Each species entry occupies half a page. As well as the statistics mentioned above, there is a photo, distribution map (three date classes), status, phenology chart (two date classes) and brief notes. The introductory matter is very well presented, indeed the whole book is excellent. The authors properly acknowledge the contribution of County Recorders - three cheers for Adrian Russell for gathering our local records and "filling in" VC55!

Danforth, B.N, Minckley, R.L. & Neff, J.L. 2019. *The Solitary Bees - Biology, Evolution, Conservation*. Princeton.

This is a hefty volume (472 pages) written by academic entomologists based in the USA. Its coverage is global and the topics include phylogeny, life-cycle strategies, sex, how bees gather and process the materials they need, nest architecture, parasites and predators. Although scientifically precise, it is still a good read - there are even snippets of humour here and there, especially in the sex chapter. Chapter 7 begins "Think of a foraging female solitary bee as a flying Swiss Army knife". The line drawings are very clear, but colour photos are restricted to 16 plates.

Newsletter 55 mentioned a bee *Chelostoma campanularum* that specialises on *Campanula* pollen so I was interested to read that pollen from this family is extremely rich in protein (50%, double that of surloin steak!) and many other bee species are hooked on it.

Steve Woodward

Life (and death) in a Cropston garden

Our modest patch of Cropston (SK5611) continued to produce interesting specimens throughout 2019. I began regularly recording insects in 2014 and the number of identifiable garden species now exceeds 750.

Herbivores, carnivores and detritivores all have suitable locations to feed, breed and shelter: piles of dead wood, stones and other natural debris, bare ground, matted vegetation, wildlife pond, insect-friendly plants, and a lawn with long grass, thistles, nettles, ragwort, moss and anthills.

My 2019 records are outlined in Table 1, with moth species dominating the statistics as a result of regular trapping.

Order	Species	Individuals
Lepidoptera - moths	197	1566
Hemiptera	70	1516
Diptera	69	672
Coleoptera	38	604
Hymenoptera	20	280
Lepidoptera - butterflies	16	129
Odonata	5	22
Orthoptera	1	19
Total	416	4808

Table 1. Summary of garden records for 2019.

Below are monthly highlights and observations of 2019. All Lepidoptera, Coleoptera, Diptera and sawfly records have been accepted by the VC Recorders or Co-ordinators. Hemiptera and aculeate determinations are my own and await formal validation.

January: A Box Bug *Gonocerus acuteangulatus* (Fig. 1) was resting on its usual bush. This species was once considered rare, previously only found at Box Hill in Surrey - feeding on Box trees. The range has expanded, as has the food plant, with reports of it feeding on Hawthorn, Buckthorn, rose, Yew and Plum trees. It was first recorded in VC55 at County Hall, Glenfield (August 2014) and from our garden in September 2014. I now have 79 garden records including nine individuals seen on one day in April 2019. Potential confusion with the Dock Bug *Coreus marginatus* may lead to under-recording.

February: I was lucky to spot a fly *Tephritis praecox* (female), a third record for VC55. It is the smallest British *Tephritis* species with a wing length range of



Fig 1. Box Bug *Gonocerus acuteangulatus*.

1.8 - 3.2 mm. The wing pattern immediately distinguished it from the regular Tephritid flies that visit the garden - *T. formosa*, *T. neesi* and *T. vespertina* - plus a single record of *T. hyoscyami* in 2017. Other *T. praecox* VC55 records include Bardon Hill and Leicester (2008), and Empingham (June 2019). A further individual (male) was observed in our garden in August 2019. The relatively few national records may be down to lack of recorder effort rather than scarcity.

March: A Chrysomelid beetle *Longitarsus dorsalis* was rescued from one of our water butts. Distribution is considered to be widespread south of the Humber, although it is 'occasional' in VC55. Pale bands on the outer edges of dark elytra combined with light orange pronotum help to separate it from the trickier *Longitarsus* species.

A variety of bug species were observed throughout the month, including Gorse Sheildbug *Piezodorus*



Fig 2. A Conopid fly *Myopa tessellatipennis*, a first VC55 record.

lituratus (Fig. 7); Sloe (or Hairy) Shieldbug *Dolycoris baccarum*; and Juniper Shieldbug *Cyphostethus tristriatus*. Several *Corizus hyoscyami* were also seen. This member of the Rhopalidae family overwinters as an adult; I tend to find them on dense bushes in the spring, and lavender in the summer.

April: I potted up a fly *Myopa tesselatipennis*, a first VC55 record (Fig. 2). This member of the Conopidae family is considered fairly widespread in Britain, but not common (possibly under-recorded). Conopid larvae are parasitic, developing inside the abdomens of bees or wasps, and are known to trigger behavioural changes in the host.



Fig 3. Golden-bloomed Grey Longhorn Beetle *Agapanthia villosoviridescens*.

A Nationally Notable 'wood borer' beetle, *Hedobia (Ptinomorphus) imperialis*, turned up later in the month and may have gone unnoticed had it not been a well-marked specimen. Other 'new to garden' species included a Honeysuckle Sawfly *Zaraea lonicerae*, possibly rare in VC55, or under-recorded. It is a robust sawfly - over 20 mm long, with metallic bronze abdomen and swollen fourth antennal segment.

April marked the first of several visits from male and female Gooden's Nomad Bees *Nomada goodeniana* and a Marsham's Nomad Bee *Nomada marshamella*. An otherwise uninteresting moth trap produced a Pine Beauty *Panolis flammea*.

May: Red Mason Bees *Osmia bicornis* (p. 11) utilised the bamboo nesting tubes in our 'insect hotel' to construct brood cells from packed mud, before stocking each cell with nectar and pollen.

Joining them were parasitic drosophilid flies, *Cacoxenus indagator*; they lay their eggs in the bees' brood cells, where the larvae will feed on the provisions intended for the bee larvae. Following pupation, an adult *C. indagator* wedges its head into a crevice in the mud wall and pumps haemolymph (insect equivalent of blood) into a pouch on the head, generating sufficient pressure to make a hole large enough to squeeze through.

The bug *Rhopalus subrufus* (Rhopalidae family) began to inhabit the rockery plants, having overwintered in the adult stage.

June: This was an excellent month for beetles: A Malachiid beetle *Axinotarsus marginalis* was spotted on a potato plant. This species has an entry in "Recent records of scarce VC55 beetles" by Graham Finch, and was new to VC55 in 2014, being recorded at Bradgate Park on three occasions by Graham. It is smaller and differently marked to the more common and widespread *Malachius bipustulatus*.

Other garden beetles included a Welsh Chafer *Hoplia philanthus*; the Ivy Beetle *Ochina ptinoides*; a 24-Spot Ladybird *Subcoccinella vigintiquattuor punctata*; and the impressive and unmistakable Golden-bloomed Grey Longhorn Beetle *Agapanthia villosoviridescens* (Fig. 3).

The first of many Large Red Damselflies *Pyrrosoma nymphula* (Fig. 4) were resting by the pond.



Fig 4. Large Red Damselfly *Pyrrosoma nymphula*.

July: The moth trap yielded our second record of the Box-tree Moth *Cydalima perspectalis*, an invasive pest species from east Asia. It is widely accepted that the main mode of introduction to Europe and the UK is the international trade in *Buxus* plants; its presence in the Caucasus region is thought to be a result of landscaping works for the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics.



Fig 5. Chrysomelidae beetle *Donacia semicuprea*.

A robberfly *Dioctria baumhaueri* (Asilidae family) made one of its occasional garden visits, complete with a smaller fly impaled on the stout proboscis. The proboscis and associated apparatus are used to inject saliva containing neurotoxins and enzymes which paralyze and digest the internal structures of the victim prior to being sucked up. "There's a soup in my fly!"

August: At long last I recorded a Red-belted Clearwing *Synanthedon myopaeformis*. The larvae live under the bark of old fruit trees, especially apple (*Malus*), which we have in the garden.

A small but distinctive Tachinid fly, *Phasia obesa*, caught my eye and was subsequently confirmed as a third record for VC55. Other records include Ketton Quarry (2003) and Thistleton area (2007). There is more detail on Tachinidae and a photo of this specimen in the *LES Newsletter 61* article by Ray Morris.

A Chrysomelidae beetle *Donacia semicuprea* (Fig. 5) was found on the rockery; roughly 7 mm long with obviously punctate elytra, metallic bronze sheen, and a diagnostic longitudinal



Fig 6. Hoverfly *Helophilus hybridus*.

groove in the pronotum. The food plant is Reed Sweet-grass *Glyceria maxima* which is present on the lawn.

Between May and July I followed the progress of Speckled Bush-crickets *Leptophyes punctatissima* as the nymphs developed into adults; August brought the final adult record of the year.

September: The month included a hat-trick of *Helophilus* hoverflies - *H. hybridus* (Fig. 6), *H. pendulus* and *H. trivittatus*. *H. pendulus* is regularly recorded from our garden and it was useful to observe the three species on the same day and compare diagnostic features.

Numbers of Gorse Bug *Piezodorus lituratus* nymphs (Fig. 7) tailed off with just a single late instar nymph at the beginning of the month.

My only record of the Common Darter Dragonfly *Sympetrum striolatum* was made in September. The Common Wasp *Vespula vulgaris* were still present in low numbers, but no *Vespula germanica* were recorded in 2019 - somewhat unusual as they have been previously abundant in the garden, sometimes more so than *V. vulgaris*.

October: A new generation of adult Dock Bug *Coreus marginatus* took advantage of sunny days to bask on exposed leaves. There were eighteen individuals on one day, failing to beat last year's record of 45 together on one plant.



Fig 7. Nymph of Gorse Bug *Piezodorus lituratus*.

Other Hemipterans were still in evidence, including the Ant Damsel Bug *Himacerus mirmicoides*. The Field Damsel Bug *Nabis fesus* and Tree Damsel Bug *Himacerus apterus* were observed earlier in the year, the latter busily feeding on the mid-instar nymph of a Sloe Shieldbug *Dolycoris baccarum*.

The late-flowering ivy attracted *Eristalis* hoverfly species including *E. horticola*, *E. nemorum*, *E. pertinax* and *E. tenax*.

November: Wet weather took its toll, but the ivy buzzed with Common Wasps and assorted flies on better days; the 'Noon Fly' *Mesembrina meridiana* was seen along with the Tachinid fly *Tachina fera* (Fig. 8), which seems to have had an excellent year in our garden and further afield. The Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta* made its last appearance.

Just when the contents of the moth trap were becoming uniformly dull, I was pleased to find pristine specimens of Feathered Thorn *Colotois pennaria* and Green-brindled Crescent *Allophyes oxyacanthae*.

December: Four bug species were recorded: *Pinalitus cervinus* (Miridae family); a Gorse Shieldbug; and the ever-present Box Bug. A Green Shieldbug *Palomena*



Fig 8. Tachinid fly *Tachina fera*.

prasina sitting on the recycling bin had fully transformed from startling green to the winter camouflage of bronze and brown; a sign that it is time for this *Homo sapiens* to prepare for further entomological endeavours in 2020.

Kate Nightingale

On the snail trail



Aplexa hypnorum

For a few years I have been trying to 'refind' a number of mollusc species that were commonly recorded in the 1980s by John Mathias and Ian Evans but have not been recorded since. The intriguing question is whether these species are effectively extinct in the area or just existing under the radar. Admittedly many of the snails are very small (1.5-3 mm), cryptically coloured and tend to be hidden away in damp places so given that few recorders actively search for molluscs it is perhaps not surprising that confirmed sightings are few and far between. It has been satisfying therefore to have found a good number of these species, though it is still unclear what the current status of their VC55 populations really are and more data is needed. The search continues.....

As is often the case, my most interesting snail discovery in 2019 came when I was not looking for molluscs at all, but focusing on something else. I was in Witherley parish, a little known backwater in the far western corner of Leicestershire, carrying out a flora

survey in fields around Ratcliffe Culey. Whilst about to climb a stile to get onto the footpath I crossed a drainage ditch by the road and noticed something in the water. Closer inspection revealed several snails gliding under the surface film and which I did not recognise. I collected a couple and took them with me for later examination, which revealed them to be Moss Bladder Snails *Aplexa hypnorum*, a species not on the VC55 mollusc database.

The bladder snails (genus *Physa* and *Aplexa*) have a helpful character trait that helps with identification - the are all 'left-handed' in that the shell coils clockwise so that the opening is always on the left, referred to as sinistral (most snails have dextral shells that coil anti-clockwise). The Moss Bladder Snail is not tiny (up to 12 mm in length) and clearly is not difficult to find so it is a mystery why it has not been recorded in Leicestershire previously. It has a preference for drainage ditches and other temporary water courses so is likely to find Witherley a good place to live. This formerly fenland area is flat and criss-crossed by drainage ditches. The species is widely distributed in the UK and not uncommon so we might expect it to be found more often in Leicestershire. My record may not be a first for VC55 as the NBN Atlas shows three other records but the details of these have yet to be collected, but still an exciting find.

David Nicholls

***Andricus infectorius* (Hartig, 1843): a new gall causer visits an old friend**

On a visit to Charnwood Lodge National Nature Reserve in September, 2018, British Plant Gall Society member, Ian Farmer found a gall (Fig. 2) on Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur* that could not be attributed to a causer using literature on British plant galls. The gall causer was subsequently identified by Chris Leach (and confirmed by Professor Graham Stone of Edinburgh University) as the asexual generation of cynipid wasp *Andricus infectorius*. Further research showed that this gall had been photographed (and posted on the Aphotofauna website) at Trengwainton Carn near Madron in Cornwall on 1st September, 2013 by David Fenwick (Fig. 1). Unfortunately, the gall had been wrongly ascribed to *Andricus inflator* and it was not until mid-2019 that it was corrected. Graham (personal communication) indicated that galls of this species had also been found during 2018 by Sally Luker in Cornwall and by Graham's research student, Koorosh McCormack, in Devon. It is interesting to note how

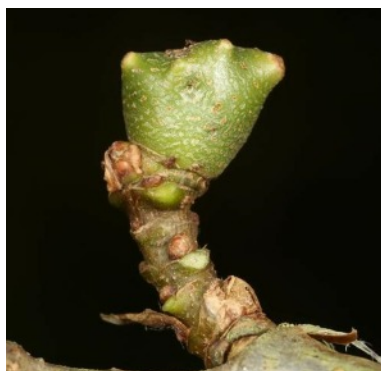


Fig. 1. Immature gall of *Andricus infectorius* photographed by David Fenwick in Cornwall in 2013 and placed on the website Aphotofauna (with permission).

distant these sites are from the Charnwood Lodge citing. It may be that this species has been present, undetected, for quite some time or there may be an alternative explanation for their distribution.

Searches at Charnwood Lodge (SK467153) during

2019 failed to detect further specimens but three examples of the gall were found a small distance away at Ulverscroft Nature Reserve (SK490124). The galls (Fig. 3) were found on a small oak tree, just inside the entrance gate at Fox Covert planted in 1997 to commemorate Leslie Jones, a stalwart of the Natural History Section, Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society and volunteer at the New Walk Museum in Leicester. Many members of LES may well remember Leslie. He did much work in cataloguing gall records for the county and in preparing gall displays for the museum. He was also a founder member of the British



Fig. 2. Mature gall of *Andricus infectorius* photographed at Charnwood Lodge NNR, January 2019.



Fig. 3. Mature gall of *Andricus infectorius* at Ulverscroft NR, January 2020. Photo: Steve Woodward



Fig. 4. Plaque by memorial oak: NHS.LLPS IN MEMORY OF LESLIE JONES KIRBY MUXLOE 1 March 1913 to 19 October 1997.

Plant Gall Society. The plaque (Fig. 4) commemorating Leslie still marks the "Leslie Jones tree" and the presence of a newcomer gall causer on its branches would have given him much pleasure.

Chris Leach

2019 Garden and Pond Update

Circumstances were such in 2019 that I was unable to do much recording of pond and garden activity. Even so, the advantage of having a wildlife garden just outside the back door is a useful asset and meant that I could at least note down any intermittent sightings of visitors. My garden is in Leicester, SK5901.

Early on, I soon realised that it was going to be another year with no frog or toad activity. Very little gardening input took place and the variable weather conditions meant that the lawn became a meadow (not a bad thing); and the herbaceous borders around the pond became rampant, offering good foraging for local bumblebees of both long- and short-tongued species. In April, these included *Bombus terrestris*, *B. lapidarius*, *B. pascuorum* and *B. hypnorum*, and just one sighting of *Osmia* mason bees. There were early butterflies too - male Orange Tips, Holly Blues, and Speckled Woods. Early April also saw the return of a drake Mallard and his prospective mate (or two) but this time, I was unable to shoo them away as in previous years - they cause a lot of damage by stirring



A male of the solitary bee *Osmia bicornis*, feeding on Green Alkanet. This species has previously nested in my garden, but was scarce this spring. Photo: Steve Woodward.

up the pond mud. The Fox was aware of their presence too. They must have moved on, because no nest was found in the garden. A Grey Heron was seen in the pond in April; and lots of the smaller birds, Robins, Blue-tits, Dunnocks and Wrens successfully reared their offspring.

Between May and September, according to availability of foraging choices around the borders, bumblebee sightings also included *Bombus hortorum*, a male *B. pratorum*, *B. vestalis*, more *B. hypnorum* but no nests; and currently, the *Bombus pascuorum* were still actively pollinating the beans and raspberries. Butterflies were often seen flying around the flowers - Green-veined Whites, Holly Blues, Speckled Woods, Gatekeepers and lots of other "cabbage whites". Basking Red Admirals loved the hot sunshine but only one Small Tortoiseshell was seen. Two day-flying moths included the Cinnabar and the Mint moth *Pyrausta aurata*.

In early June, damselflies were on the wing - Large Red Damsels and Azure Damsels. Other visitors included a couple of male Broad-bodied Chasers; Banded Demoiselle males with blue spotted wings, and more recently in August/September, a female Southern Hawker was often seen patrolling the pond and laying eggs between the stones at the pond edge. The hot weather also brought out several Common Darters basking on the stones in the sunshine. The latest butterfly on 14 September was a Comma, and a male *Araneus diadematus* spider was seen edging ever closer to a larger female in her web. Whether or not he was successful at courting her - or just bailed out on a thread - or eaten! - remains unclear.

The last insects seen in the garden in 2019 were:- *Bombus pascuorum* on 28 September, *Bombus terrestris* and Speckled Wood on 30 September, *Aeshna cyanea* on 12 October and a Silver-Y moth sheltering on the back door on 9 November.

Soon be time to start recording 2020 - a better year I hope!

Maggie Frankum

Looking for help?

The following are willing to act as an initial point of contact for providing advice and information to members.

Arachnids (Mites & Ticks):- Ivan Pedley, 48 Woodlands Drive, Groby, Leicester LE6 0BQ. 0116 287 6886. ivan.pedley@gmail.com

Arachnids (Opiliones, Harvestmen): - Ray Morris, see page 2.

Arachnids (Spiders):- Paul Palmer
palmerpjp@gmail.com.

Arachnids (Pseudoscorpions):- Ed Darby 01509 569670 lboro.ecols@ntlworld.com

Biological Recording:- Sue Timms, Leics & Rutland Environmental Records Centre; Room 400, County Hall, Glenfield LE3 8RA. 0116 3054108
Sue.timms@leics.gov.uk

Chilopoda:- Helen Ikin, 237 Forest Road, Woodhouse, Woodhouse Eaves, Leics LE12 8TZ. 01509 890102. helen.canids@btinternet.com

Coleoptera:- Graham Finch, 14 Thorndale, Ibstock, Leics. LE67 6JT: finchgraham1@gmail.com

Collembola: Alan Cann, 17 Overdale Road, Leicester LE2 3YJ. alan.cann@gmail.com Online identification guides:
<https://collembolla.blogspot.com/p/identification-guides.html>

Diplopoda:- Helen Ikin (see Chilopoda).

Diptera (Some families):- Ray Morris (see page 2).

Diptera (Nematocera - Mosquitoes, Blackflies & Craneflies):- John Kramer, 31 Ash Tree Road, Oadby, Leicester LE2 5TE. 0116 271 6499.
john.kramer@btinternet.com

Hymenoptera (Symphyta - Sawflies):- Dave Nicholls, 69-71 Church Lane, Ratby, LE6 0JF.
nicholls.99@btinternet.com

Hymenoptera (Bumblebees):- Maggie Frankum, see page 2.

Hymenoptera (Other aculeates - Bees, Wasps & Ants):- Helen Ikin (see Chilopoda).

Hemiptera:- Dave Budworth, see page 2.

Isopoda (Woodlice):- Helen Ikin (see Chilopoda).

Lepidoptera:- Adrian Russell, 15 St Swithin's Road, Leicester LE5 2GE. 0116 241 5101.
Adrian@wainscot.demon.co.uk

Mecoptera, Neuroptera, Plecoptera :- Steve Woodward, see page 2.

Mollusca: - Dave Nicholls (see Hymenoptera (Symphyta)).

Odonata:- Ian Merrill i.merrill@btopenworld.com

Orthoptera:- Helen Ikin, see Chilopoda.

Plant Galls:- Maggie Frankum, see page 2.

Psocoptera:- Helen Ikin, see Chilopoda.

Thysanoptera: - Ivan Pedley, see Arachnids - Mites.

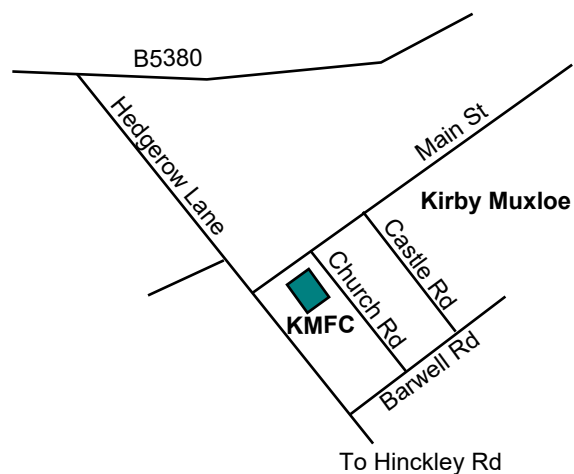
Trichoptera (adults):- Ray Morris, see page 2.

Indoor Meetings Programme

Our venue is Kirby Muxloe Free Church, Main Street, Kirby Muxloe LE9 2AN SK517042. The session starts at 7:30, but most members arrive half an hour earlier for a natter, with tea, coffee and biscuits. Visitors are welcome.

Thursday 20 February 2020 - Update on Spider Recording in VC55. Alan Cann will show us the latest available data and distribution on this relatively under-recorded subject.

Thursday 19 March 2020 - How to find rare beetles. Graham Finch taking it a step further, moving away from casual observations in order to find the more unusual species.



Anona Finch
