



BRANCHLINE



ISSUE 48

Winter 2006

Heritage Open Day

Marion Vincent—Heritage Warden for Rothley



I was recording the girth of a tree in Rothley Cemetery early in 2004 when I looked at the Cemetery Chapel and realised that this was a building I knew nothing about, sitting quietly back from the road and never used. I obtained access, got so interested that I wrote up its history from the Parish Council Minutes, found that it had been built in 1904 and reached its centenary in September 2004 just at the weekend of the Heritage Open Days throughout England when buildings not normally open to the public can be visited. I did not achieve that ambition to open it as part of HODS but the thought of an event in the village stayed with me and in 2006 it all happened.

Brian Verity, Archaeological Warden for Rothley, myself as Natural History Heritage Warden and Terry Sheppard, a local Historian, were working on recording the Rothley Ancient Parish Boundary and the conversation turned to HODS. We sent off for the Organisers Pack, went to Worcester Cathedral to a 'Getting Started' workshop and with this information we returned home to plan our event.

We aimed for three venues; the Chapel of the Knights Templar at the Rothley Court Hotel, Rothley Parish Church and the Old School Rooms. Although HODS can cover up to four days we decided on just one day which had to be Sunday due to the usage of the venues for other events, especially weddings. Permissions were sought immediately, the date booked and a timetable established for our meetings leading up to the event. There was a lot of

work involved but if you have a written plan, a monthly meeting, lots of enthusiasm then it can be achieved and, most importantly, be enjoyable and rewarding.

At the Templar Chapel visitors could meet some of the current Knights Templar, learn about stone effigies, view the Babington Family Tree and the History of Rothley and I was there with a Heritage Warden display. In the grounds were medieval knights displaying their garments and artefacts. At the Parish Church was a quiz trail for children, a Young Archaeologists Club trail around the grounds, the wallhanging of the History of Rothley and, at the end of the day, the 1788 Abolition of Slavery Sermon was preached. Cream teas were enjoyed in the Old School Room by many former pupils.

All this work, but would people come? We need not have worried as 846 visitors came to the chapel, 758 of these were adults, which proves that you do need events for the older generation. They came not just from Rothley but all the surrounding villages, even surrounding counties. We had visitors from New Zealand, Australia and the USA, all with friends who had family in the village many years ago. Others had family who worked at The Temple (now the Rothley Court Hotel), many wanted to see again where they went to school and others searching for more clues to their Family Tree. It really was a brilliant day and far exceeded our expectations.

If you are interested in buildings, however small, why not be a Heritage Warden for Built Heritage? You don't have to do a HODS, but you might just get hooked!

Community Heritage Initiative

Holly Hayes Environment and Heritage Resources Centre
Leicestershire County Council
216 Birstall Road, Birstall, Leicestershire, LE4 4DG
Tel: (0116) 267 1377 Email: chi@leics.gov.uk
www.leics.gov.uk/celebrating_wildlife



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Who are you?

Leicestershire Badger Group comprises volunteer members of the public dedicated to the conservation and

protection of badgers and their habitats in Leicestershire and Rutland. The Group was founded in 1984, and is a member of the Badger Trust, the national umbrella organisation, which is based in London and is supported by professional staff. There are about 80 similar badger groups in Britain, mostly county-based.

What are your areas of interest?

Badgers are threatened by both illegal and legal activities. Illegal threats include badger digging and baiting, snaring, poisoning, lamping, and sett interference. Legal threats may include road and housing developments, forestry and agricultural operations, and the regulated killing of badgers in the bovine TB trials (Leicestershire and Rutland badgers are free from this disease). Also, an estimated 50,000 badgers are killed each year in Britain through road traffic accidents. The Protection of Badgers Act was introduced in 1992 to protect badgers and their setts. Consequently, much of the Group's interest is to try to ensure that this law is upheld and not broken, either deliberately or through ignorance. We are also involved in badger welfare issues.

What do you do?

We collect and record information on the population and distribution of badgers in Leicestershire and Rutland, through sett surveying and recording of road kills. Where appropriate we contribute to national surveys.

- We provide advice and assistance on 'badger problems' to landowners, developers, members of the public, and all relevant bodies within the counties of Leicestershire and Rutland
- We provide information which will enable the appropriate authorities, both local and national (e.g. Police, RSPCA, Natural England, DEFRA, Local Authorities), to prevent the illegal and cruel abuse of

badgers and the destruction and damage of their setts

- We deal with injured badgers and orphaned cubs, in liaison with Leicestershire Wildlife Hospital, veterinary practices, and the RSPCA, with the view to rehabilitate individuals back to the wild
- We keep members of our Group informed about badger issues through regular meetings, newsletters, and field trips
- We keep the general public aware of issues concerning the badger and its welfare through talks, the media, sales/information stands at various local events, and occasional open meetings.

When and where do you meet?

The Group organises a series of monthly evening talks covering a wide range of wildlife interest, but with some emphasis towards badgers and other mammals. These are held from September to May at Holly Hayes Environment and Heritage Resources Centre, Birstall. Outdoor meetings, including badger watches, are made to various local sites in June and July, and there is traditionally a walk at New Year to look for and record badger setts.

Do you have a newsletter?

Yes. This is issued at least twice, and up to four times, a year. It contains committee contact and programme details, and various articles of local and national interest.

Is there a membership fee?

Yes - £9 per annum (£2 of which is a levy to the Badger Trust.)

How can I contact you?

To find out more about the Group contact our Chairperson, David Duckett ☎0116 2597231, Secretary, Pam Mynott ☎0116 2715006. To join contact our Membership Secretary, Jenny Palmer ☎0116 2719203.

Do you have a website?

Yes at www.badgergroup.org.uk Sett records, and details of badgers killed on the road may be filed online. Our national group, the Badger Trust, has a website at www.badgertrust.org.uk



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Ladybird survey

The CHI Ladybird survey, which is in its second year, has shown an appearance of some newcomers to Leicestershire and Rutland, as well as an increase in numbers of some other, previously rare, species.



The **orange** ladybird (*Halyzia sedecimguttata*) was first recorded in the county in 2001. Easy to recognise by its orangey brown colour, it is not an aphid eater, living on fungi and mould. It used to be very rare, associated with sooty mould on sycamore trees, but is now found on all sorts of bushes and trees, and occasionally comes into gardens. It is now firmly established in Leicestershire.



Another newcomer to the counties is the **adonis** ladybird (*adonia variegata*). The first reliable record in Leicestershire was in 1990 at Gilroes Cemetery. It likes bare or waste ground and is often found in quarries and cemeteries. Records received show a substantial increase of this ladybird in the county, which could be attributed to global warming.



The widespread **7-spot** (*coccinella septempunctata*) is a big aphid feeder. Its numbers are boosted each year by a vast influx from the continent.



The **eyed** ladybird (*anatis ocellata*), which is our biggest native species, feeds on the aphids that live on conifers, and, probably for that reason, is less recorded. Conifers are always a good place to search for the more unusual ladybirds.



The **19-spot** (*Anisosticta novemdecimpunctata*), or water ladybird is a wetland species that likes lush vegetation at water margins. Most ladybirds like drier ground but this one likes to get its feet wet!



The **24-spot** (*subcoccinella 24-punctata*) is mostly confined to eastern Leicestershire and Rutland. Unlike most ladybirds it is hairy and is a vegetarian, eating leaves rather than aphids. Not often found in gardens, it prefers rough grassland.



The **14-spot** ladybird (*Propylea 14-punctata*), another aphid eater, is the most commonly seen yellow ladybird. It is almost as widespread as the 7-spot, but its numbers are more static.



A new and controversial arrival for this year in the two counties is the **harlequin** ladybird (*harmonia axyridis*). Larger than native species, was first introduced into America 20 years ago and is now the most common species of ladybird there. It is thought to have been imported into the UK on plants from mainland Europe, and was first recorded in Rutland in July this year, with sightings in Leicestershire in August.



Although the records received so far in the county have helped show changes in numbers of various species, many are under-recorded, and more records are needed next year.

This article is available online with colour photos of the species featured along with a colour identification guide for you to download.

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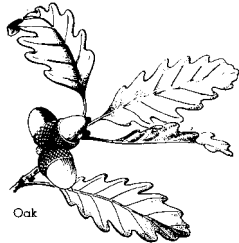
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My Father, A Leicestershire Life 1900-1998

*Inspired by a recent Branchline feature about first memories of wildlife, **Eunice Lucas**, a regular reader of Branchline, offers her memories*

My love and understanding of the countryside was inspired by my father. He was my childhood mentor and I loved and respected him as a person who personified the phrase, a true countryman.



He was born in 1900 and died just two days before his 98th birthday. My father epitomised the English countryside, as he was steeped in its lore. He observed all the changes as the century progressed, and held firm to his faith and patriotism.

His own nickname was Pudding. In those days the Yorkshire pudding with the meat on the top was taken to the bake house on Sunday to be cooked in the bread ovens for the grand total of 2 pennies. One Sunday morning my father tripped on his way to the bake house and covered himself with the batter. His friends saw this accident and so the name pudding stuck, just like the pudding to his clothes!

These lads would all play on the village square such games as marbles, skimming cigarette cards, long tail pony, tick rounders, cricket and football. An occasional horse and cart would only rarely interrupt these activities. In a wooden box mounted on two old pram wheels horse manure was collected from the streets to take to his father's allotment, where all the family vegetables were grown. In season he would gather mushrooms, blewits and blackberries, as well as doing other chores like collecting firewood, water from the village pump and bird scaring for the farmers.

Some of his earliest memories were of his maternal grandfather. He was a pig farmer at the Cottage Homes. These were a collection of ten foster homes, each one housing 20 or more children, girls on one side, boys on another. One day a boar pinned him against a wall and caused serious injuries. His legs were so badly damaged that he never walked again, and eventually died. Then grandmother was reduced to living on Poor Law pay of 10 shillings (50p) a week, a quarter of which went on the rent. No works compensation in those days to help towards the rearing of the family!

My father left school aged 13 and went to work in the shoe trade. He learnt his trade alongside a man who was also a poacher. My father soon picked up all his skills, including how to set snares to help out the food supply at home. Otherwise the family had meat only on Sunday. Then for the rest of the week, his mother made a stew, which he called a 100 to 1 shot. A hundred bits of potato to one bit of meat!

My father disliked the changes that he observed in the countryside, as he grew older, blaming them on modern farming techniques. He noticed the demise of the corncrake, which had been quite common when he was a lad. They would sit tight on their nests, when men scythed the grass, but modern machinery has resulted in them becoming almost extinct in cultivated areas. Similarly the meadows were full of wild flowers and herbs, which he thought, helped to make good hay and gave the animals some immunity from disease. He also mourned the destruction of the old hedgerows covered with honeysuckle, columbine, dog roses, elderberries, sloe and blackberries. These provided homes for birds, insects and small mammals. One of his



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particular favourites was the long tailed field mouse, which he described as a little monkey balancing along the branches eating the berries and insects, pausing in his climbing by balancing with his tail around a twig.

This love of the countryside enveloped his whole life. To go on a walk with my father was like entering a magic world. He taught my sister and myself all the names of wild flowers, herbs, trees, birds and animals. We learnt to recognise the songs and nesting sites of birds, where to find mushrooms and blewits in season. He would identify the tracks of animals, the marks in the grass where a hare had made his form and spaced out its young leverets for safety. Observation of the seasons, country sayings and weather lore were all passed on to us. So I can still smell rain in the air and repeat the old adage "Rain before seven fine before eleven; Red sky at night shepherds delight". His gardening skills were legendary throughout the village, and he utilized them up until his 95th year.

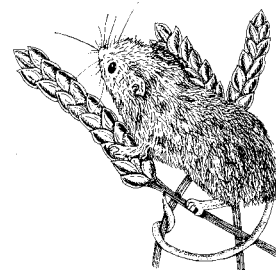
The world is a sadder and duller place with the loss of a true countryman, my father.

Transforming your Rubbish for Free!

The 'Rot-a-Lot' Composting Club gives residents free advice and experience of composting. It provides tips to improve compost and hosts workshops around the County so people can talk to experts and fellow composters to find out how to improve or maximise their composting. Members will be kept up to date with club news and events through newsletters. Residents joining the club will receive a pack to help them get the most from their compost bins. Packs include: an easy household guide to composting, a kitchen caddy with biodegradable liners, a 'Composting for All' booklet, information on how to purchase a reduced price compost bin. To join call Leicestershire County Council 0116 265 8385 or e-mail: compost@leics.gov.uk

Natural England

Natural England came into being on 1st October uniting English Nature, the environment activities of the Rural Development Service and the Countryside Agency's Landscape, Access and Recreation division.



Natural England will be a 'new and exciting' organisation with the responsibility to conserve and enhance the value and beauty of England's natural environment and promote access, recreation and public well-being for the benefit of today's and future generations.

It will have all the powers of the founding bodies, including awarding grants, giving advice and information, designating Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, managing National Nature Reserves, and enforcing the associated regulations.

Natural England is working towards the delivery of four strategic outcomes, which together deliver on their purpose to conserve, enhance and manage the natural environment for the benefit of current and future generations.

- A healthy natural environment: England's natural environment will be conserved and enhanced.
- Enjoyment of the natural environment: more people enjoying, understanding and acting to improve the natural environment.
- Sustainable use and management of the natural environment
- A secure environmental future: decisions which collectively secure the future of the natural environment.

• Natural England's statement of strategic intent, *Strategic Direction 2006-2009* can be found at www.naturalengland.org

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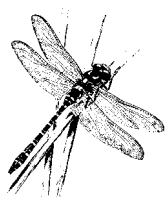
The Landscape and Biodiversity of Newtown Linford

Heritage Warden Richard Lowe has been involved in collating an extensive report linking to the village's parish Plan—this is an excerpt from the report, a copy of which is archived at Holly Hayes.

Newtown Linford Parish is exceptional geologically, botanically and zoologically. As a consequence it contains several Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) which are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. These include: Benscliffe Wood, Bradgate Park, Cropston Reservoir, Lea Meadow, Roecliffe Manor lawns, Sheet Hedges Wood, Swithland Woods and Ulverscroft Valley. The sites are ecologically varied, some are extensive and moreover form important recreational areas for the general public.

There are also a large number of designated Wildlife Sites (= Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation). They identify known sites of declining or endangered native species and their habitats, and are the best examples for Leicestershire. They also provide areas of ecological interest where people can learn about natural habitats and species, though there is no right of access beyond existing rights of way. They draw attention of the owner to the importance of the site and provide guidance to land managers and policy makers, although there is no statutory obligation on the owners or managers.

The Lyn Brook is specifically referred to in the Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan, as concerns "clear fast-flowing streams". [The Newtown Linford Brook is usually termed the "Lin", "Linn" or "Lyn", and sometimes rather fancifully as the "Lin River" although this exaggerates its status]. It is important both to protect its flow and to keep it free of pollutants and silt, especially also as it is the main natural source of water



flowing into Cropston Reservoir.

The Parish is well-wooded compared with other parts of Charnwood Borough, and woodlands cover 15% of the area of the Parish. If Bradgate Park and Swithland Woods are included in entirety, this constitutes 45% of the Parish.

The post-enclosure network of hedges, drystone walls, copses and woodlands of the pre 1926 Estate mostly still survive. They are important because they provide shelter for wildlife, and a widespread network that links the various woodlands together, allowing passage of animals and birds. Their role as semi-woodland also helps in dispersal of woodland plants. This is essential for local populations of animals and plants to remain healthy and to remain healthy and survive.



Larger traditional-type gardens also provide a haven for wildlife, notably birds, because of the varied habitats which they provide. It is noticeable that numbers of species and of individual birds are greater in older gardens than in new, and larger gardens often contain less disturbed areas that benefit wildlife, including butterflies and moths as well as hedgehogs, moles and other small mammals.

Despite the number of houses in Newtown Linford more or less tripling in 50 years, together with the changes to farming, Newtown Linford has hitherto largely retained the earlier aspect of the original estate village. It retains views across open countryside, much of it accessible by public footpaths. This is important as it forms the main entrance to Bradgate Park, and is a major rural escape for the citizens of Leicester -- although views from higher ground in the Park to the east are becoming marred by large industrial buildings and extensive development north of Leicester. However, from higher ground in Bradgate Park and elsewhere, Newtown Linford remains substantially hidden from sight along the bottom of a steep-sided valley.

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The East Midlands Brownfields Project

"Conserving Butterflies and Moths at a Landscape level in the Midlands and the East of England" is a new project developed with funding from English Nature's Countdown 2010 scheme, together with the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation by Butterfly Conservation East Midlands. The project, which runs until April 2008, involves conservation initiatives for threatened Lepidoptera at a landscape scale in many different areas and habitats, with a key focus on brownfield sites.

Two East Midlands brownfield areas are specifically written into the project programme - the Notts/Derbys Coalfields area and the Ketton Limestone region. These hold important, and often vulnerable, colonies of several species, including the butterflies Dingy Skipper, Grizzled Skipper, Green Hairstreak and Wall and two moths - the Four-spotted and Chalk Carpet. All these species are conservation priorities in Butterfly Conservation's present work programme and so this new project builds on existing conservation work. Some of the specific actions within the project, which was launched April 2006 are:

- § Organising training events to help with survey work and habitat assessment for the key brownfield species.
- § Preparing habitat management plans for some of the most important and/or vulnerable brownfield sites. This will involve close liaison with landowners and managers.
- § Providing training and advice for landowners and managers in habitat management and creation techniques for key brownfield species

- § Restoring or creating habitat for certain species e.g. the Four-spotted.
- § Creating demonstration site(s) where habitat management can be experimented with e.g. on restored colliery tips for the Dingy Skipper.
- § Establishing regular monitoring regimes at certain sites to assess the value of particular management techniques.

Armed with the knowledge of the habitat requirements of the Four-spotted and Chalk Carpet, from training sessions, volunteers will be encouraged to identify potential new areas, which can be searched for these species. This activity will be continued in 2007. Guidance will be disseminated to volunteers on how best to monitor habitats at specific sites where the target species still remain. This information, coupled with monitoring for the insects, should help steer any habitat management work at these and other sites.

Anyone wishing to contribute or become more involved in the project, should contact either Barry Prater (co-ordinator butterfly Conservation East Midlands, ☎ 01777 818504, e-mail barry@prater.demon.co.uk or Jane Ellis Butterfly Conservation Regional Officer (West Midlands) ☎ 01788 510695 e-mail: jellis@butterfly-conservation.org

Your records!

Leicestershire Environmental Records Centre has received over 1400 records so far this year through the community surveys run by CHI, with more butterfly and ladybird records expected. Firsts have included Harlequin ladybird records for the two counties and a freshwater jellyfish sighting!!



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Foxhunting: past, present, future?

Foxhunting: past, present, future? was a one year pilot project led by Leicestershire County Council's Melton Carnegie Museum and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The primary aim of the project was to impartially record the impact of the 2004 Hunting Act through written, photographic and oral media on the changes to the way of life for those who support and oppose hunting and the effect on the associated trades and industries. As a result a unique oral history archive comprising 39 recorded interviews has been created in Leicestershire. The archive will be available to the public from 1 December 2006 by appointment at Melton Carnegie Museum (tel. 01664 569946) or the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (tel. 0116 257 1080).

In addition, the project undertook a survey of collections held in public museums, libraries and archives and private collections in the East Midlands and targeted sources around the country. The aim was to discover the range of fox hunting relevant collections held by other institutions and owners, which will help to inform future developments at Melton Carnegie Museum.

On 2nd October a new website featuring downloadable education resources for teachers was launched. The National

Curriculum linked resources, developed in consultation with teachers by Sara Mair of Mair Education, focus on Citizenship, the Humanities and English at Key Stage 3, with additional opportunities for students at Key Stage 2 and 4.

The teaching resource comprises four themed lessons with suggested activities, activity sheets, supporting resources, a timeline and a glossary. It is also supported by photographs, objects, campaign adverts and oral history interview extracts which can be downloaded in the classroom.

Visitors to the website can also view a selection of objects and paintings relating to fox hunting held by Leicestershire's Environment and Heritage Service by following the link to *Collections Online*. A sample of material from Derby Museum & Art Gallery, Media Archive for Central England, Northamptonshire Libraries and Information Service and the People's History Museum is also featured on the website under *Collection Highlights*.

Visit: www.foxhuntingvoices.org.uk
Melton Carnegie Museum is seeking to sustain elements of this project and include some of the acquired resources in future exhibitions.

To find out more about the project contact:

The Keeper, Melton Carnegie Museum on 01664 569946 or email: dancey@leics.gov.uk.

ABOUT BRANCHLINE

Branchline is produced by Leicestershire County Council's Holly Hayes Environment & Heritage Resources Centre and is the newsletter for the Community Heritage Initiative (CHI), a project developed with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Rutland County Council. It aims to be a networking publication and used as an information source for Parishes, groups, and individuals interested in protecting and discovering more about the area's countryside and heritage. Mailings are free of charge as a service to the communities of Leicestershire and Rutland. If you have any articles that you would like to see in Branchline, drop us a line at Holly Hayes (details below), or e-mail them to chi@leics.gov.uk. Articles are welcome and **the deadline for the Spring 2007 Edition is February 1st 2007.**

The articles supplied do not necessarily reflect the views of Leicestershire County Council or the CHI partners.



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