

NEWSLETTER 26

February 2002

The Case of the Baffling Bumble - to bee or not Nb!

Throughout the spring and summer, six bumble bee species (*Bombus pratorum*; *B. pascuorum*; *B. terrestris*; *B. lucorum*; *B. lapidarius* and *B. hortorum*) regularly forage along the garden flower borders, attracted by the continuous supply of nectar and pollen sources that I try to provide. Some bumbles have short tongues and some have long ones, adapted to take advantage of the various flower forms. *Bombus hortorum* bumbles sometimes nest in the garden (eg:- at the base of the pampas grass), and a worker is recognised by the three bright yellow bands and a white tail. It also has a long face and a long tongue and is able to exploit flowers with long tubular corollas, such as Yellow Archangel, White Dead-nettle, Phlomis, Red Campion, Monkshood and Aquilegia etc.

So in early June (4th, 5th & 6th) 2001, imagine my surprise when I couldn't help but notice a large, very dark coloured, dark winged bee foraging around the same long tubular flowers that the *B. hortorum* had been using (in particular, the dark purple Aquilegia). It had collected bright yellow pollen in its pollen baskets, which meant that it had to be a bumble bee rather than a cuckoo bumble. I caught and photographed the bee - long face, indistinct dark brownish-yellow bands on the collar, scutellum and abdomen; and a dirty beige coloured tail. Could it possibly be a *Bombus ruderatus* (Nb) worker? or was it perhaps a very dark form of *Bombus hortorum*? It closely resembled the *B. ruderatus* "intermediate form" on Plate 1, in *Bumblebees, Naturalists Handbook 6* (Prys-Jones & Corbet, 1987). Jan Dawson and I compared it with the *B. ruderatus* collection at New Walk Museum and it certainly looked similar to some of the specimens. I haven't yet seen a

specimen of a dark *B. hortorum*. However, rather than kill the bee in case it was rare, I preferred to release it and hopefully find out more about its lifestyle - but I only saw it once more on 17th July. Even a dark *B. hortorum* is unusual and would be a "first" for the garden.



Bombus ruderatus (intermediate form)/ or *B. hortorum* (dark form) bumblebee worker (long face/tongue) on dark purple Aquilegia. SK596014, Leicester 6th June 2001.

I wrote and sent photographs to Mike Edwards of B.W.A.R.S. asking him for ideas/information about the possible identification of *B. hortorum/ruderatus* etc.

I also sent him photographs of "normal" *B. hortorum* workers that regularly come into the garden, for comparison. He replied to the effect:-

"I wish I knew the answer! Although it is possible to segregate out a form which apparently agrees with the description of *B. ruderatus*, we have been unable to find any populations of this species, just singletons being found in most cases. It is clear that there are gradations between both forms, both here and in the rest of Europe, but without a population to study, there is not much hope of

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ENTOMOLOGICAL
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Next Copy Deadline:

19th August 2002

looking at the ecology to see if they show any separation here".

I wonder if I'll see another dark bumble in 2002?

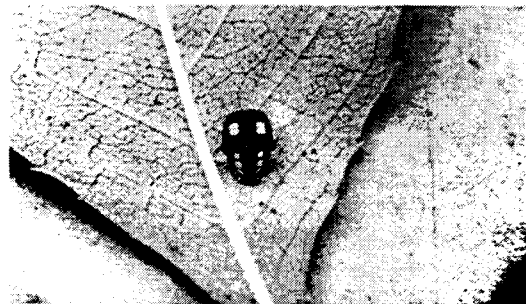
Maggie Frankum
8th December 2001

Orange Ladybird (*Halyzia 16-guttata*) - an update

A welcome response from Jenny Owen to my "Orange Ladybird - New to Leicestershire" article in Newsletter 25 (September 2001), means that it's not as new as we thought it was, as she has records of it from previous years. Still at that time we believed it was and it certainly encouraged people to keep watch. Apart from Adrian Russell spotting them coming to MV lights at six county sites (see N/L 25), Stuart and Adam Poole also recorded them at a MV light in their Wigston garden, on several occasions during the summer.



Orange Ladybird (*Halyzia 16-guttata*) 1-5-01.
Attenborough Arboretum, Knighton, Leicester.



(M. Frankum & Gareth Burton)

Halyzia 16-guttata pupa. On Ash (*Fraxinus phraxinus*), Attenborough Arboretum, Knighton, Leicester.

Back at the arboretum (University of Leicester, Attenborough Arboretum, Knighton, Leicester) in early October, Gareth Burton noticed some ladybird Pupae (black with bright yellow spots) on ash leaves

but didn't recognise them for what they were, until Orange Ladybirds started to emerge from them (I kept one pupa at home and the ladybird emerged on 15th October 2001). So there's definitely a breeding population at the arboretum. It's also interesting to note that one of Adam Poole's records was for 12th October 2001 - perhaps this was newly emerged as well.

Cream-streaked Ladybird (*Harmonia 4-punctata*)

Also in early October, Gareth found yet another species of ladybird at the arboretum, that keyed out as a Cream-streaked Ladybird (*Harmonia 4-punctata*) - with both the "plain" and "spotty" forms (as Plate 1.7 and 1.8 in "Ladybirds", Naturalists Handbook 10 (Majerus & Kearns 1989), [specimens to Jan Dawson at New Walk Museum, Leicester]. Derek Lott has found two other Leicestershire records:- 1) at Donnington Park (D. Lott, 1991); and 2) in a pitfall trap at Cademan Moor (Kate Ward [det.D.L.] 1995). (If there are any post-1997 records, then these are not yet entered onto the computer).

Maggie Frankum

Dr Jennifer Owen has published an article on ladybirds in the January 2002 edition of Organic Gardener (p28-29) in which she deals with the orange spot ladybird and other species of ladybird found in her garden. Thanks to Maggie Frankum for drawing this to my attention.

Since writing the above I have received the following communication from Jenny Owen.

Frank Clark (Ed.)

I did not know, until read Maggie Frankum's article in Newsletter 25. that the orange ladybird *Halysia 16-guttata* is so noteworthy in Leicestershire. I first caught one in the Malaise trap in my garden at 66 Scruptoft Lane, Leicester in 1997, there was another in 1998, another in 2000, and so far (8 October), five in 2001. Apart from the value of the records, this beautiful insect is a delight to see.

Malaise trapping has confirmed observations in the garden, that the 2001 insect season effectively ended after the first week of September, unusually early, and reminiscent

of the drought year, 1976.

Jenny Owen

Alien ladybirds go shopping!

In January 2002, a black and red patterned ladybird was found on a bunch of grapes in ASDA (Hinkley) and given to Richard Iiffe. It did not key out to any of the British ladybirds using Majerus & Kearns (1989), so hot on the id trail, I phoned another "ladybird" person (John Meiklejohn, Worcester), who immediately recognised the description that I gave, because he'd found a live one on grapes at TESCO (Worcester). It has been identified as a South African species *Cheilomenes lunata* (Coccinellidae, sub-family Coccinellinae). The ladybird has also been found on grapes at three other TESCO branches in southern England (there is some information and a photo available on the internet if you type *Cheilomenes lunata* in search). Jan Dawson also has a specimen at New Walk Museum, again on grapes at TESCO (Beaumont Leys, Leicester).

Perhaps *C. lunata* is a "veggie" ladybird that is attracted to powdery mildew on the grapes? Any ideas?

At least two of the ladybirds were found alive. Is this a new invader? Will it spread?

Reference

Majerus, M. & Kearns, P. 1989 *Ladybirds*. Naturalists' Handbooks 10. Richmond Publishing Company. ISBN 085546 267 1

Maggie Frankum

Wet, wild and wonderful: wetland inverts in 2001

In 2000, I started a systematic study of beetles in ponds and other wetlands on Wildlife Trust reserves. 2001 saw no further progress because of restrictions connected with Foot and mouth disease. In fact, I did more beetling in the USA and Austria than the UK. However, I was called out to look at ponds in Barrow, Preston, Essendine and Puddledyke as well as working with Jane McPhail, John Kramer and David Voce on candidate Local Nature Reserves at Saltersford Valley and Moira Junction.

The pond at Essendine is a seasonal water body in a new housing estate in the middle of

the village. The flora is still at an early pioneer stage and includes Water Stonewort. The pond's poor visual appeal has led to a lack of appreciation among some local residents that is not shared by the local invertebrates. The most common water beetle there was *Berosus affinis*, which is new to Leicestershire and Rutland, though well established in the Peterborough area. The freshwater snail, *Lymnaea palustris*, is not common in vc55, but was abundant at the same pond.

At Puddledyke, I was accompanied by Louise MacAlavey, Neil Pilcher and Helen O'Brien from the Wildlife Trust. Water spiders were found in the unmanaged areas of the site, though not in the recently deepened section. The pond is rich in aquatic invertebrates including the weevil, *Stenopalpus rufinatus*, which feeds on the Water Fern, *Azolla*, one of several alien plants present on the site. I was particularly pleased to find the nationally rare rove beetle, *Aloconota languida*, in leaf litter at shaded margins of one corner of the pond. This is the third record for Leicestershire after Saddington Reservoir and some old neglected mediaeval fishponds near Aston Flammville. It may be well established at local wetland sites in an advanced stage of vegetational succession.

The new ponds at Moira Junction turned up several nationally scarce water beetles, but more interesting from a local perspective was the abundance of *Haliphus confinis*, an uncommon species in Leicestershire and one that has probably been misidentified in the past. The rove beetle, *Stenus nanus*, was found at the margins of the smallest and shallowest of the three ponds. This is the first confirmed record of the species in Leicestershire as old records could refer to the rarer, more southerly distributed *S. assesquens*, which was recorded in 1991 from Barrow Gravel Pits.

Larvae of the Red-eyed Damselfly, *Erythromma najas*, were abundant in the subsidence flash at Saltersford Valley. In future, we will have to start being careful with our identifications of *Erythromma*. A recent edition of *British Wildlife* reports that *E. viridula* was been recorded in Bedfordshire in 2001. It seems to be moving north very quickly.

Derek Lott

Our Public Insect Collections and their Future

Collecting insect specimens is an essential component of entomological science, and of insect conservation in particular. Many individual insect species can only be identified with any degree of confidence by taking them home and studying them under a microscope. Furthermore, voucher specimens are often required to back up identifications of unusual or difficult species. In the study of groups such as beetles, flies, spiders etc., collecting is a routine and necessary activity and we could not pursue their study or conservation without collecting. In recent years there has been a widely felt reaction against the practice of collecting insects, because it invariably involves their untimely death. However, other activities that lead to far greater carnage amongst insects, such as gardening, road travel and habitat management on nature reserves, appear to be immune from this general disapproval.

In some groups such as butterflies and dragonflies, there are excellent guide-books that enable satisfactory identifications of all species in the field without recourse to collecting. A well-taken photograph is usually adequate back up for the identification of rare species. However, even in these groups, it is useful to have reference collections that contain representative series covering a range of time and locations. Old series of Small Skippers can confirm that the influx of Essex Skippers to Leicestershire is a recent phenomenon and that they were not overlooked by past entomologists. A recent study of series of fenland Swallowtails revealed that their wing lengths have been getting progressively shorter over the last two centuries, possibly as a result of isolation due to habitat fragmentation. Within the last year, two common British dung beetles, accepted as a single species for over a hundred years, have each been found to comprise two species. Old collections can reveal the distributions these split species both geographically and over time.

We are lucky in Leicestershire and Rutland to have public insect collections that have been built up over 150 years. In 1997 the division of the old Leicestershire Museums Service prompted a great deal of debate about the future of these collections. The city and county museums services are now working in partnership to provide effective and complementary services in this area. From 2002, Leicestershire specimens from the old

collections will be available for study at a purpose-built store between Barrow and Sileby not far from the A6 and close to bus services and even train services, if you don't mind a twenty minute walk. There will be benchspace, microscopes and other facilities for visitors by appointment. At present, it is envisaged that access will be during normal office hours, but I would be interested to assess demand for special evening or weekend sessions.

Both museum services will be maintaining British reference collections to help local entomologists identify their captures or photographs. Given a choice, I suspect that entomologists will want to visit the store where staff expertise reflects their particular interest. Accordingly, all spiders, including Leicestershire specimens, as well as other spirit material will stay with the City Museums Service in the care of Nick Gordon and his staff. Lichens, fungi and bryophytes are moving to Barrow in January. It is envisaged that installation of insect collections could begin around Easter, starting with the Lepidoptera (Leicestershire collection and British reference collection). Please contact Tony Fletcher (tel: 0116 267 1950) nearer the time for further details. We are looking for British reference material in other groups, especially Diptera, Hymenoptera and Hemiptera, which have quite a few gaps in them, so if you know of any spare collections, please get in touch.

Derek Lott

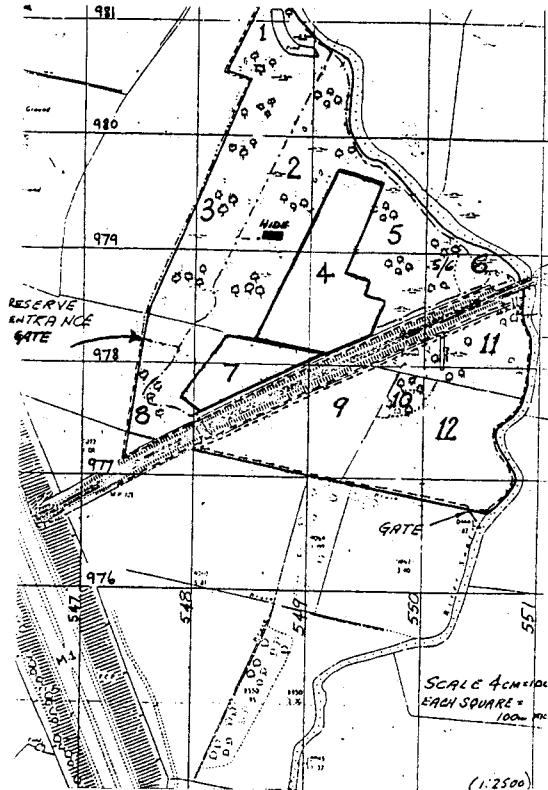
CRANEFLIES OF NARBOROUGH BOG (VC55, SP549977)

THE SITE

Narborough 'Bogs' is shown on the first 1835 edition of the Ordnance Survey Map, situated half a mile downstream (800m south) from a mill on the River Soar, and so it is a well-established wetland site. It has been known to Leicester naturalists for over 100 years and thorough surveys of Plants, Birds and Lepidoptera have been made. In 1975 it was purchased by the then Leicester & Rutland Trust for Nature Conservation, and has been managed as a Nature Reserve ever since.

The map (opposite and above) shows the 12 sectors into which the reserve is now divided, and wherever possible, Recorders should allocate their future records to the relevant sectors. Sector 1 is a seasonally flooded, wooded, oxbow lake where some interesting beetles have been found. Sectors 2,3, 5 and

11 are wet woodland. Sector 2 contains the remains of an osier bed which lies not far from the River Soar. Sector 4 is the reed bed, which presents quite a challenge if you want to sample the insect populations there. Below the reeds is a layer of peat 1.8m deep overlying a deposit of gravel. Sectors 9 and 12 are grassland, no. 12 being dominated by tall herbs, such as hedge parsley.



Narborough Bog Nature Reserve

A HISTORY OF DIPTERA RECORDING ON NARBOROUGH BOG

The first national list of Flies (Diptera) was attempted in 1856 by F.Walker in his 'Insecta Britannica.' and in 1886-8 G.H. Verrall published his Lists of British Flies, including Craneflies (Tipulidae).

At a local level Dr. W.A.Vice collected a few flies from Narborough Bogs, none of them Craneflies, and the earliest of his records from the site is for July 23, 1885. His records are presented in the 'Leicestershire Victoria County History', published in 1908. The Leicester Museum Dipterist, P.A.H.Muschamp lists 5 different species of craneflies from Narborough Bog for 1935, perhaps two of which are reliably identified. One of these is the very distinctive *Pedicia rivosa* whose larvae are semi-aquatic in marshy soils. As far as I know, it has not been recorded recently,

and it would be interesting to know if it still occurs on the reserve.

The Hoverflies of Narborough Bog were surveyed in 1975-77 by David Lewis, and in 1981 by a younger J. Kramer, who published a checklist [1]. (It is time for this to be updated.)

THE CRANEFLY SURVEY

The data for Narborough Bog presented here was obtained as a result of seven visits from 19.3.99, 21.4.00, 22.4.99, 13.5.01, 21.5.99, 8.8.00, 13.9.99.

ECOLOGY

Most of the crane fly species are detritivores, feeding on the dead and rotting remains of plant material, including wood. Some tipulids will also feed on living roots, and on mosses. The larva of *Cylindrotoma distinctissima* is a curious exception. It is a wildly segmented, spiny, caterpillar-like object which feeds on leaves of plants such as marsh marigold, violets, or wood anemone. The Notable *Atypophthalmus inustus* is a fungus feeder in its larval stage, while the larvae of *Tricyphona immaculata* (Pediidae) are active carnivores, which live in marshy soils.

EVALUATION

None of the 33 crane flies on the current checklist are of RDB status, and just one is Nationally Notable (NN). 42 species of Crane fly have been found at Swithland Wood, and the maximum for a wet woodland spinney in Leicestershire is 45. There is therefore reason to believe that many more species await discovery at Narborough Bog.

NARBOROUGH BOG SPECIES LIST DIPTERA:TIPULIDAE

Nephrotoma appendiculata
Nephrotoma quadrifaria
Tipula lunata
Tipula vernalis
Tipula submarmorata
Tipula oleracea
Tipula paludosa
Tipula lateralis

CYLINDROTOMIDAE

Cylindrotoma distinctissima

PEDICIIDAE

Tricyphona immaculata

LIMONIIDAE

Cheilotrichia cinerascens
Erioptera lutea
Molophilus appendiculatus

Molophilus griseus
Molophilus ochraceus
Ormosia hederæ
Ormosia lineata
Ormosia nodulosa

NARBOROUGH BOG SPECIES LIST DIPTERA:TIPULIDAE

Nephrotoma appendiculata
Nephrotoma quadrifaria
Tipula lunata
Tipula vernalis
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Cylindrotoma distinctissima

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Molophilus griseus
Molophilus ochraceus
Ormosia hederæ
Ormosia lineata
Ormosia nodulosa

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Ron Woodcock, Warden of Narborough Bog, for showing us round, and LRWT for permission to work on the Reserve.

REFERENCES

1. Kramer, J. The Hoverflies of Narborough Bog. LRTNC Newsletter Winter 1983
-
- John Kramer**

Summer Field Work

Once again we are sticking with our current research sites, and hopefully, though by no means certainly, our schedule of site visits will not, again be disrupted by FMD in 2002. Can I remind members that our chosen Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust sites are:-

Launde Big Wood (GR. SK 785037)
Launde Park Wood (SK804037)
Loughborough Big Meadow (SK538218)
Narborough Bog (SP 549979).

Permits will be needed if you want to collect specimens. The procedure is either to apply directly to the Trust Office at Longfellow Road, Leicester, LE2 6BT, (Tel. 0116 270 2999), or via me.

There are useful site maps in the Trust Reserves Handbook, and a map to show the sectors of Narborough Bog is shown in this newsletter.

We have tried formal field meetings for many years, but without success. For example, four people turned up for our meeting at Narborough Bog last year, and two of those were from outside the County! You know who to contact if you want company on site visits, or help with the identification of any given group (see Newsletter 24, p 11). If not, then contact me, your Secretary, and I will probably know who to pass on your name to. Have an enjoyable season, and be sure to write up your results for the Newsletter!

John Kramer

The AGM, held on December 6th, 2001, followed the usual format and 11 members were present to sample the mince pies. Arising from the previous minutes a question was asked about the fate of the Leicestershire Insect Collection, and this topic is covered by Derek Lott in the current Newsletter. Also in response to the previous minutes, Harry Ball stated that it was hoped to re-start the work on the Black Hairstreak BAP Project this Spring, after the disruption caused by last year's Foot & Mouth epidemic.

Our current membership remains at about 62, and our subscription of £5 per head was sufficient to give us a small surplus. It will not therefore be necessary to raise our subscription rate this year, if you all pay up! If your subscription is still outstanding, please send it to your treasurer as soon as possible.

Our basic programme of outdoor and indoor meetings continued successfully during 2001, although attendance at meetings averages only about a dozen people. We also supported the Holly Hayes Garden Party, and the 'Wild Wet and Wonderful' Rainbows event at Watermead Park. Both of these events help to raise the public awareness of insects, and to remind people that real insects are far more beautiful and interesting than anything seen on a TV screen. We hope to get involved in the same events next year.

Newsletters 24, and 25 were produced successfully in March and September, and our Acting Editor, Adrian Russell, was congratulated on two excellent editions. Fortunately our new Editor is now able to take up his post after a spell of bad health. We wish him well. Please send him lots of good copy about the insects and other invertebrates in Leicestershire. There is no shortage of worthwhile work to be done, and things to write about!

John Kramer **(Secretary)**

Microlepidoptera

I've just identified a very well-marked and distinctive micro taken at MV by myself and Ron Follows at Ketton Quarry on 01/08/01: *Pammene aurita* (formerly *P. aurantiana*) - whose larval foodplant is Sycamore. According to my records, this is the first record for VC55.

In 21/07/2001 I took a pyralid moth that I could not immediately identify. Subsequently, I tentatively identified this as *Acrobasis consociella* - a species not previously recorded from the County (VC55). I recently got round to removing this specimen from the setting board, but before so doing took a couple of photographs (one attached) which I emailed to Tony Davis, who runs the National Pyralid & Plume Recording Scheme. Tony has kindly confirmed this as being *A. consociella*. So, a new County record - well not quite! Having recently re-discovered a small store-box of unidentified pyralids, I was now able to compare this well-marked specimen with two relatively worn specimens that I had previously taken and also thought might be *A. consociella* (but had subsequently forgotten about!). I am now satisfied that both of these are also *A. consociella*, the details being: Rutland Water reed bed area, 18/07/1999 and Charnwood Forest Golf Course, 17/07/1999, the latter effectively being the first County record of this species.

In his email reply, Tony had also mentioned another species of Pyralid, *Trachycera* (formerly *Numonia suavella*). This rang a few bells in my mind! Checking through my database, I noticed that there was a record of this species from Ron Follows, recorded from Rutland Water (in the vicinity of the reed beds) on 08/07/01. Regrettably, I had failed to draw to his attention that this was the first County record of this species. Well it would have been, were it not for the fact that there was an

extremely well-marked specimen of this species in the very same store-box! This specimen was taken by me at Clipsham Quarry on 07/08/1998 would therefore appear to be the first County record of this species. Goater (British Pyralid Moths, 1986) describes this as being "widespread but local and rather uncommon in England south of Herefordshire and Norfolk; associated with stunted blackthorn bushes and thickets in rather open country" - which well describes the location within Clipsham Quarry that I took this specimen.

I apologise to local recorders for the delay in passing-on this information and for any confusion that this may have caused. My only defence is that I always like to check potential new County micromoth records against specimens in the Leicestershire Reference Collection. Hence I had placed this specimens in a small store-box for this very purpose, but unfortunately I'd got rather behind with this specimen identification work!

Adrian Russell

WEB SITES

For those who have the technology there is a wealth of natural history sites to visit. Below are some sites I recommend you to visit. pittaway.tripod.com/sphinx/list.htm This site is dedicated to hawkmoths of the Western Palearctic and giving a considerable amount of information about their distribution and ecology.

Insects on WWW

Takes you to a considerable number of 'URLs' related to entomology (*sensu lato*).

<http://www.watdon.com/>

Catalogue for Watkins and Doncaster, The Naturalists. Suppliers of entomology, microscopy, taxidermy etc. equipment.

<http://www.insects.demon.co.uk>

Catalogue for Lydie Rigout supplier of entomological books and equipment.

I am sure that you will know of many more sites of entomological interest so send them to me for inclusion in the next Newsletter.

Now that I am able to take up the task of Newsletter editor I would like to thank Adrian Russell for the magnificent job he did on Newsletters 24 and 25 whilst I was indisposed.

Frank Clark (Editor)

Programme 2001/2002

Thursday 14th March 2002

Indoor Meeting: Insect Photography Workshop
A chance to discuss photography tips, techniques and equipment, including digital photography. There are no fixed speakers, the aim being to draw-upon the expertise within the Society. This is a topic that regularly crops-up at indoor meetings, so this should provide either an opportunity to share your knowledge, or to learn more about the subject.

Summer Meetings

Please see the information given earlier.

Looking for advice or information?	
The following are willing to act as an initial point of contact for providing advice and information to members. As you will see, this list is far from complete - If you think you can help, please let us know.	
Coleoptera	Derek Lott, Holly Hayes, 216 Birstall Road, Birstall, Leicester LE4 4DG Telephone: 0116 267 1950 Email: dlott@leics.gov.uk
Diptera	John Kramer, 31 Ash Tree Road, Oadby, Leicester LE2 5TE Telephone: 0116 271 6499 Email: jk@chezejog.demon.co.uk
Hymenoptera (Bees)	Maggie Frankum, 3 Chapel Lane, Knighton, Leicester LE2 3WF Telephone: 0116 270 5833
Lepidoptera	Adrian Russell, 15 St. Swithin's Road, Leicester LE5 2GE Telephone: 0116 241 5101 Email: adrian@wainscot.demon.co.uk Leics. Moth Group website: www.pintail-close.freereserve.co.uk/vc55mothgroup
Biological Recording (and other orders)	Darwyn Sumner, Holly Hayes, 216 Birstall Road, Birstall, Leicester LE4 4DG Telephone: 0116 267 1950 Email: dsumner@leics.gov.uk