

# NEWSLETTER 31

September 2004

## Buddon Wood SSSI

(A summary of a presentation to the LES 11<sup>th</sup> March 2004)

Entomologists have for long recognized Buddon Wood (Grid ref. SK 561149) as being Leicestershire's most important insect site which makes its present reputation of being Britain's largest hardrock quarry particularly regrettable and galling. Furthermore, its diversity was not restricted to its insect fauna for it also supported a greater variety of spiders than any other site in the County as well as an exceptionally varied flora of both flowering and flowerless plants, a good variety of mammals, including very large numbers of bats, and a large and varied bird fauna.

Situated within and on the south side of Charnwood Forest, Buddon Wood constituted the best example of Sessile Oakwood in the East Midlands. It had long been a Mecca to the entomologist, and naturalists who visited the wood in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries discovered much to excite them. Some of the old oak trees then were festooned with Mistletoe (*Viscum album*) and now scarce lichens, such as the Tree Lungwort and the wood was full of Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) which supported several rare moth species. The wood was also full of great colonies of Red Wood Ants (*Formica rufa*) which hosted rare and local beetles, including *Clytra quadripunctata*, *Dinarda markeli* and *Stenichnus godarti*, all closely dependant on the ants, whilst the ants themselves played an important role in the wood's ecology and provided food for the large population of Green Woodpeckers. Numbers of other beetle species typical of ancient forest

occurred here: *Calasoma inquisitor*, *Lasiorhynchus cavifrons* and *Tropideres sepicola*, this latter for long known to occur nowhere else in Britain, and the rare Eared Leaf-hopper *Ledera aurita* could still be occasionally swept from oaks in the 1930's.

Although the quarrying has destroyed the hill's summit (131m. above sea level) and all the higher ground the remaining fringe of woodland when surveyed by the Leicestershire Wildlife Consultancy, on behalf of Redlands Aggregates Ltd., in 1995, was found to support a significant proportion of the wood's rare and local organisms, though sadly the formerly abundant Red Wood Ants and their fascinating associated invertebrates have not been seen here since the clear felling during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War and the subsequent disastrous fires which burnt deep into the humus over a large part of the woodland floor for some months over 50 years ago.

Following the war-time felling, regeneration soon got underway with masses of seedling birches (two species) and plenty of coppiced growth from the Sessile Oaks (*Quercus petraea*) and Small-leaved Limes (*Tilia cordata*), by 30 years producing good woodland habitat, much however to be abruptly destroyed again with the onset of quarrying.

What of the future of this ancient woodland site? The screening mounds continue to produce surprises: colonization by uncommon plant species and varied butterflies and other insects.

## LEICESTERSHIRE

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**Next Copy Deadline:**

January 2005

This last summer (2003) produced the first Brown Argus (*Aricia agestis*) for the site while the huge quarry cliffs are now haunted by Peregrins (*Falco peregrinus*) and Ravens (*Corvus corax*). But what when the extraction stops? Will this precious site suffer the indignity of similar large quarries by becoming an infill site for our ever increasing products, or will the close proximity of Swithland Reservoir and/or its Site of Special Scientific Interest status prevent this.....? One can only hope that the future will be kinder to it than the recent past!

**Peter Gamble**

NB. The Brown Argas has more than doubled its range over the past twenty years, colonising and becoming established on 'set-aside' land in arable areas. (Ed.)

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### Clearwing moths in a Malaise trap.

I read with interest Adrian Russell's article about clearwing moths in Newsletter no. 30. From 1972 to 2001, I operated a Malaise trap in my Leicester garden (Grid Reference SK 624054), and occasionally it captured clearwings. In July 1976 (the drought year) single individuals of each of three species were recorded: Current Clearwing *Synanthedon tipuliformis*, Yellow-legged Clearwing *S. vespiformis* and Red-Belted Clearwing *S. myopaeformis*. In June 1998 and July 2001, single individuals of *S. myopaeformis* were caught. A Malaise trap uses no bait, merely intercepting insects in the course of normal flight, so my sporadic records would suggest that, although rare, there are a few clearwings around in some years.

**Jennifer Owen**

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### Cottonwool Galls on Oak Catkins

**Definition:-** "A gall is an abnormal growth produced by a plant or other host under the influence of another organism. It involves enlargement and/or proliferation of host cells and provides both shelter and food or nutrients for the invading organism" [Redfern, Shirley & Bloxham 2002].

Cottonwool galls are caused by the cynipid wasp *Andricus quercusramuli*, on the catkins of English oak [*Quercus robur*] and Sessile Oak [*Q. petraea*]. What's intriguing, is the fact that this wasp is just one of several species in the genus *Andricus* that cause distinct and easily recognisable galls on oak [eg: the Marble gall - *Andricus kollari*; and the Knopper gall -

*Andricus quercuscalicis* etc], yet all the wasps look fairly similar and are difficult to identify without the actual gall or keys. Nearly all these gall causers have alternating sexual and asexual [all female] generations, that occur at different times of the year, on different parts of the tree [leaves, twigs, roots, buds, catkins or acorns]; and introduced species even have one generation on a different oak species [Turkey Oak, *Quercus cerris*].

Cottonwool galls are the sexual generation of *Andricus quercusramuli* [the asexual generation is a bud gall]. The first one that I ever saw, was ten years ago on the L.E.S. field meeting to Croxton Park, in July 1994. The galls are uncommon even though when new, each gall is a dazzling white mass of cottonwool-like hairs, that can be seen from some distance away, eg:- in 1998, at Broughton Castle, near Banbury, Oxon, Roy spotted a 20mm diameter gall when he was 50 metres away from the tree! As they mature, the hairs turn brownish and are less conspicuous. I've only seen the galls on three or four occasions since then, most recently in May 2003 at Southwick Wood, Northants; and this year at Burbage Common Open Day, when Steve and Ros Smith brought in a specimen from their farm at Dadlington, Leics. [collected on 16.05.2004]; and Roy & I found another one at Evington Arboretum, Leicester, on 12.06.2004.

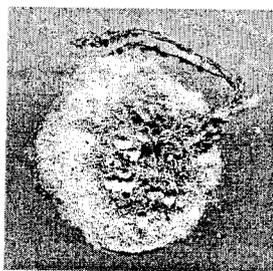
The spherical mass of white hairs hides up to 20 gall chambers, each about 2mm dia. and occupied by one larva. These mature and emerge in late June [Redfern & Askew, 1992] and after mating, the females then cause the alternate asexual generation galls in oak buds - which I have seen only once in 1998 at Hartsholme Country Park, Lincoln. The life cycle doesn't always go to plan and *Andricus* galls are often invaded by inquilines [= other cynipid wasp lodgers]; and may be parasitised by even smaller chalcid wasps. The microcosm of *goings-on* inside galls is a fascinating subject and so I decided to rear-out both the Dadlington and Evington Arboretum galls, to see just what was happening in each case. The galls were put into jars, with fine mesh over the top and then put outdoors in natural conditions [but sheltered from extreme weather]. On the 13th June 2004, 8 *Andricus quercusramuli* wasps emerged from the Dadlington gall but nothing else has emerged since. On the 22nd June 2004, the Evington gall produced just one *Andricus quercusramuli* and three [2 male, 1 female] very tiny black chalcid parasitoids - the gall had been invaded! More chalcid wasps emerged daily until the 28th June 2004 [a total of 15 males and 14 females] and there have been no more since.

With lots of help and keys from Robin Williams [British Plant Gall Society Insect & Invertebrate Group Co-ordinator], I was able to identify the wasps as *Aulogymnus skianeuros*, [he has since verified my specimens].

If you have a microscope, a fair bit of patience and can focus attention on checking the jars regularly, then I recommend anyone to have a go at rearing out - it's amazing!

1. The chalcid wasp *Aulogymnus skianeuros* not only parasitises cottonwool galls [sexual generation]; *Andricus grossulariae* [one of the latest newcomers to Britain - I've found the gall on *Q. robur* at Kew Gardens - see attached pic]; and is extremely common in *Biorhiza pallida* - the oak apple gall, it also parasitises Bedeguar galls [Robin's Pincushion - *Diplolepis rosae* - galls on *Rosa*] - so it invades galls on two different genera - oak & dogrose.

2. All the *Andricus quercusramuli* wasps from the Dadlington & Evington Arboretum galls were female [even though the galls were sexual generation - no males].



*Andricus quercusramuli* at Broughton Castle

#### References:-

- Redfern M., Shirley P., Bloxham M. (2002) *British Plant Galls* F.S.C. AIDGAP Series  
 Redfern M., Askew R.R. (1992) *Plant Galls: Naturalists' Handbook 17*. Richmond Publishing  
 Eady R.D., Quinlan J. (1963) *Hymenoptera, Cynipoidea* R.E.S. Handbook.

**Maggie Frankum**  
 11.07.2004

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## A NEW MACRO AT BARWELL

Members may recall Dave Budworth's review of the status of the Grey Shoulder-knot (*Lithophane ornithopus*) in the last Newsletter. With few exceptions, most records mentioned seemed to occur in late autumn but according to the literature, this species quite happily overwinters and emerges again from February

to April. In the 22 years of light trapping at Barwell, I have never seen this species.

2004 Moth trapping in my Barwell garden (SP434965) started on 4th March and you can imagine my disappointment, after relatively high daytime temperatures (it reached 13°C), when 12 hours of electricity gave only one moth. The consolation - it was a Grey Shoulder-knot! Four days later, the same happened again - so as this is written two moths from two 12 hour traps and both being the first and second records! On both occasions the overnight minimum was 2°C - perhaps they only fly when it is very cold?

Ray Morris

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***Where's my net! I've just spotted an all-black bumble buzzing about in the garden [SK596014].....***

When garden bumbles become familiar visitors, anything "different" stands out a mile. I'd noticed this black bee once or twice in late June but it was only ever a brief encounter and I never managed to catch it. On the 1st July 2004, patience paid off because I eventually netted it on it's sixth circuit of the garden [having missed the bee several times and swatted one of my pot plants into the old water bath twice!]. It definitely wasn't a *Bombus lapidarius* [black-bodied red tail true bumble]; or a female *Anthophora plumipes*, the Hairy-footed Flower Bee - a solitary bee that looks like a small all-black bumble, with orange pollen baskets [males are brown], because their lifecycle was finished this year in mid-June.

It proved to be a male with 13 antennal segments and possibly a cuckoo bumble. In fact, it looked very much like Plate 53 in Ted Benton's "*The Bumblebees of Essex*" book [a melanic *Bombus (Psithyrus) campestris*]. However caution was needed, because photos don't always give sufficient clues for accurate identification purposes, so I prepared the specimen and compared the male "bits" to Fig. 5.34, the Key to the "*Genital capsules of male cuckoo bumbles*". The specimen matched another cuckoo bumble *Bombus (Psithyrus) sylvestris* - completely black specimens occur rarely [Benton, 2000]. To complete the process, I sent the specimen and my tentative identification to Mike Edwards of BWARS, who said that I was "undoubtedly correct" and that he has one like this in his collection.

*Bombus (Psithyrus) sylvestris* is a cuckoo bumble that parasitises nests of *Bombus pratorum* [banded red tail] - and there just happens to be an active *Bombus pratorum* nest

in my heather bed! This is the third male colour form that I have found here in the garden.



*Bombus (Psithyrus) sylvestris red tail tip*



*Bombus (Psithyrus) sylvestris Khaki tail tip male*



*Psithyrus* dark form

Information on Bumblebees:-

Ted Benton (2000) *The Bumblebees of Essex*. Lopinga Books  
Dave Goulson (2003) *Bumblebees - behaviour & ecology*. O. U. Press  
Pryce-Jones & Corbet (1987) *Bumblebees - Naturalists' Handbooks 6C*. U. Press  
Chris O'Toole (2002) *Bumblebees*. Osmia Publications, Banbury

F.W.L. Sladen (1989) *The Humble-bee*.  
Logaston Press

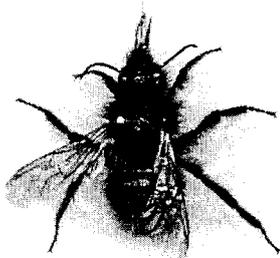
Maggie Frankum  
08.07.2004

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### Another cuckoo bumble

Last Saturday [17/07/2004], Leicester Lit. & Phil. [Natural History Section] visited North Farm near Bosworth Battlefield. Stephen & Ros Smith showed us around their arable farm, managed with a strong bias towards encouraging wildlife, with ponds, wildflower areas, woodland and bee mixtures [borage/phacelia/red clover] growing on set-aside etc.

I caught a bumblebee that was foraging on spear thistle flowers, along with a black-bodied red tail *Bombus lapidarius* worker. The bee looked like a *B. lapidarius* but the jizz was somehow "different". The bee was a male [13 antennal segments] but the yellow collar on the thorax was missing..... Using Ted Benton's book "*The Bumblebees of Essex*", it keyed out as *Bombus [Psithyrus] rupestris*, the cuckoo bumble that is a parasite in the nests of *Bombus lapidarius*. It was the first time that I'd seen this cuckoo bumble species and Mike Edwards [BWARS] verified my identification. Three days later [20/07/2004], Gareth Burton brought me a bumble specimen from the University of Leicester Attenborough Arboretum, Knighton, Leicester. It was also foraging on spear thistle flowers and proved to be the same species - a male *Bombus [Psithyrus] rupestris*!



*Bombus (Psithyrus) rupestris*

Maggie Frankum

### Using a computer for recording data. - 'Recorder 2002'

When I purchased an early version of Recorder ten years ago, I was totally baffled. I spent all of a precious weekend, and then more, trying to come to grips with it, but without success. The instruction manual, in common with many similar computer software manuals of the time, seemed to be written more to baffle than to instruct the novice. All I wanted to do was to enter my records, and all that needed was a simple protocol. Not on records, I think I can say that my phobia is now cured.

'Recorder 2002' is much easier to use than earlier versions, and also, when you know the simple procedures, data can be entered rapidly. The records can be listed in a report, or exported to a map, or even via email to another recorder. Data may also be exported into an Excel spreadsheet, in order, for example, to produce a phenology of any given species.

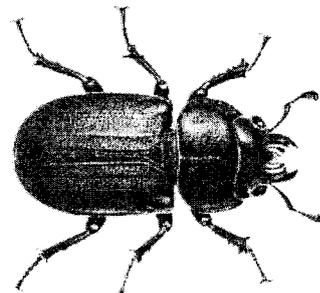
If there are recorders in Leicestershire and Rutland who are thinking of using a PC to record their data, or even new local users, don't suffer, there are now many other users in the County available to contact for help. ('Recorder 2002' is software produced by the National Biodiversity Network. Web site: [www.nbn.org.uk](http://www.nbn.org.uk))

John Kramer

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### Community Transport?

Yesterday (27.07.2004), I found a Lesser Stag Beetle (*Dorcus parallelipedus*) on my garden path and it could scarcely move for the sheer numbers of mites clinging to it's legs and underneath it's body. I assume that these mites use the "**beetle-bus**" to travel from place to place, just like the ones that cling to bumblebees? I tried to lessen the load prior to releasing the beetle in my vegetable garden but the mites were most reluctant to let go!



*Dorcus parallelipedus*

Maggie Frankum

## The Collection Resources Centre, Barrow on Soar

Thanks to Derek Lott and Tony Fletcher for leading a very successful meeting at the Collection Resources Centre on 15<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2004. Sixteen members attended this, our final meeting of the winter season. Before we were shown the collections, we were given a list of general guidelines for volunteers working at the centre. Anyone working with a particular family of insects should ask if there are any special guidelines that they should follow. For example, cabinet drawers do not have interchangeable lids, so only one lid should be removed at a time, and care should be taken not to mix them up. Original labels should never be removed from the pins, even if they are large and untidy.

All the dry collections of Insects are now at Barrow except for the Diptera, and they are due to arrive there by the end of September.

There are many jobs to do, as follows:

1. Curation and restoration of damaged specimens
2. Putting the Lepidoptera and the Coleoptera collections into the new checklist order.
3. Listing and cataloguing all specimens.
4. Entering details of collections into the computer.
5. Updating the computer database with the new storage locations.

This is our Leicestershire collection and if any members feel that they can provide some voluntary help at the Collection Resources Centre during the day, please contact Tony by phone at 01509-815515, or by email at: AFletcher@leics.gov.uk.

**John Kramer**

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### Bumblebees watch out - something is lurking in the flowers!

I've just spotted a mating pair of *Conops quadrifasciatus* [Conopidae] on the marjoram in the garden [04.08.2004], so local bumbles had better be alert, because it has a very nasty lifestyle! *Conops quadrifasciatus* are parasitic flies [mimicking yellow and black striped wasps] that lurk around the flowers waiting for an unsuspecting bumble victim to approach. The female fly quickly inserts a single egg into the bumblebee's abdomen, through the intersegmental membrane. The egg hatches and the larva passes through three instars, feeding off the abdominal contents till it more or less fills the space, taking 10 - 12 days to kill the

bumblebee. The fly larva then pupates inside the dead bee, emerging as an adult the following summer. During larval development, the behaviour of the parasitised bumblebee changes, in that it stays outside the nest at night because the cold conditions help to slow the development of the fly larva and prolongs the bumblebee's lifespan. The parasitised bumble continues to forage for the colony but it's nectar gathering capacity is restricted! Also, the dying bumblebee buries itself underground, which increases the parasite's chances of surviving the winter.

\_Reference

Goulsen, D. (2003). *Bumblebees - behaviour and ecology*. O.U.P.

**Maggie Frankum**

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### A Bit of the History of British Entomology

Just one of the pleasures of reading data from the Diptera collection of the Natural History Museum is that it brings you into contact with the entomologists of previous eras. A name on a label, leads to an obituary, which gives a glimpse into other lives and other times.

I was recently reading the obituary of the coleopterist Charles Owen Waterhouse, (1843-1917) who worked in the Entomological Room at Bloomsbury from 1866. The author describes the activities in the room '.....while the spare Dickensian figure of Frances Walker was to be seen engaged in his encyclopaedic attempts to catalogue and describe beyond the capacity of any single entomologist.' !!

Montagu House, Bloomsbury, was purchased by the Government in 1754, to house the collections of Hans Sloane, and others. It was the start of the British Museum, and the Natural History section was established from Sloane's collections. On 18th April 1881 the Natural History Museum on Cromwell Road, South Kensington, was opened, and C. O. Waterhouse and the other entomologists on the staff moved from the rather small Entomological Room in Bloomsbury to the suite of large rooms that we know today. The 200 year-old collections of the 'Royal Society Repository' were also added and it must have been an exciting time.

Charles Owen Waterhouse was privileged in many ways. His father was keeper of the Geological Museum from 1851 to 1880, and, as his names reflect, he was godson of both Charles Darwin and Robert Owen. He had two brothers, and a brother-in-law who were all entomologists. You can imagine the

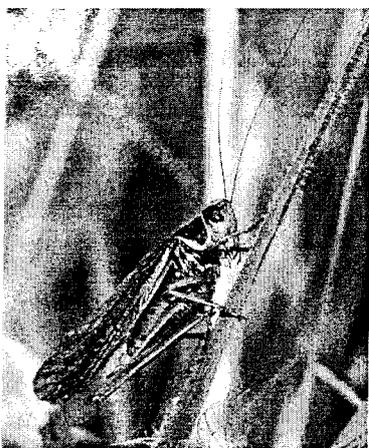
conversations around the dinner table. To complete a circle and return to the subject of flies, Charles' brother Edward (1850-1916) was a great friend of the Dipterist George Verrall, (1848-1911) and together they collected specimens for the Natural History Museum, in Scotland and elsewhere.

**John Kramer**

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### Roesel's Bush-Cricket in Leicestershire

There appear to be no previous records for Roesel's Bush-Cricket (*Metrioptera roselii*) in Leicestershire. This species has been recorded in Rutland around Rutland Water. On the 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> August single individuals were seen at Priory Water, Asfordby (Grid Ref.SK 7118 ) by Steve Houghton and Tim Goodlife. If anyone has seen this species in Leicestershire Darwyn Sumner at Holly Hayes would like the records.



Roesel's Bush-Cricket (Photo by C. Houghton)  
**Frank Clark (Ed.)**

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### Book Reviews

***Studying Invertebrates* by C.P. Wheeler & P.A. Cook (2003). *Naturalists' Handbooks* 28. Richmond Publishing Company, Slough £9.95 (pbk) ISBN 0-85546-313-9.**

This handbook covers designing an investigation, sampling invertebrates, general identification of invertebrates, gathering and presentation of data, and statistical analysis. The section on designing an investigation is brief but provides a reminder of the care required to design a critical investigation. The section on sampling invertebrates is the main part of the book describing in detail the many ways devised to collect invertebrates. The section on identification of invertebrates is illustrated with line drawings and plates but, in my view, is superfluous. I feel sure that anyone interested enough to purchase this book will already know, for example, what a bee or spider looks like however, it does give useful

references to identification keys to the various taxa. The sections on gathering and presentation of data, and statistical analysis are a clear but brief guide to the methods. This book is a good starting point for those interested in designing and carrying out an investigation.

***British and Irish Pug Moths: A Guide to their identification and Biology* by A.M. Riley & G. Prior (2003). Harley Books, Colchester £29.50 (hbk). ISBN 0-946589-51-8.**

This book covers the 52 species of moths of the genus *Eupithicia* and close relatives. Each species is illustrated by natural size photographs and illustrations of genitalia and abdominal plates which, together with diagrams of larval markings, aid identification of this difficult group. Comprehensive information is given on life history, collecting, rearing and distribution maps. Recommended for the serious student of the Geometridae.

***What Good are Bugs? Insects in the Web of Life* by G. Waldbauer (2003). Harvard University Press. £19.95 ISBN 0-674-01027-2 (hbk).**

This book covers many aspects of insect life and the immense role they play in pollination, seed dispersal, plant defences, the provision of food and defence to other animals; the influence on the population dynamics of plants and other animals, and recycling and decomposition. A book for dipping into rather than reading straight through but worthy of a place on the bookshelf.

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### Plea for LESOPS material.

It is some time (January 2003?) since the last LESOPS was produced. As a society we really need to produce more, certainly one per year. Please consider producing a manuscript on your specialist group or something more general on Leicestershire and Rutland entomology (see past LESOPS for inspiration). Send your manuscripts to Ray Morris as soon as possible or, if you are uncertain if your contribution is suitable for a LESOPS, contact him first.

**Frank Clark (Ed.)**

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### Obituaries

Sadly another member has passed away - Harold Godsmark died on April 6th 2004.

**Stuart Poole (Treasurer)**

## Winter Programme 2004-2005

All indoor meetings are held at Holly Hayes, 216 Birstall Road, Birstall, meeting at 7.00pm for a 7.30 start. Exhibits are always welcomed and refreshments are included.

### 2004

Wed 13 October

Joint meeting with Leicester Lit. & Phil. Michael Majerus, author of the New Naturalist books on Moths, and on Ladybirds, will give a talk entitled: 'Moths, Myths, Mysteries and Melanism.' It will take place at the Museum, New Walk, starting at 7.30pm. Members should use the back entrance

Thurs 11 Nov,

Eamonn Mallon The insect immune system

Some definitions of the immune system preclude invertebrates from even having an immune system. Either because they say immunity is a characteristic of vertebrates only or an immune system must have memory. But for those people, who research the biology of the apparently defenceless 95% of animals, this is largest amount of anthropocentric boulderdash. Ah well yes concede the doubting thomases, there is an invertebrate immune system but it is general, it responses to all pathogens in the same undifferentiated way. It is the brutish and sluggish caveman to the flamboyant cavalier of vertebrate acquired immunity. This talk is an attempt to show that the caveman is quite agile with his many clubs.

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Thurs 9Dec.

AGM and Mince pies.

Thurs 20 Jan 2005

Ian Merrill: Dragonflies

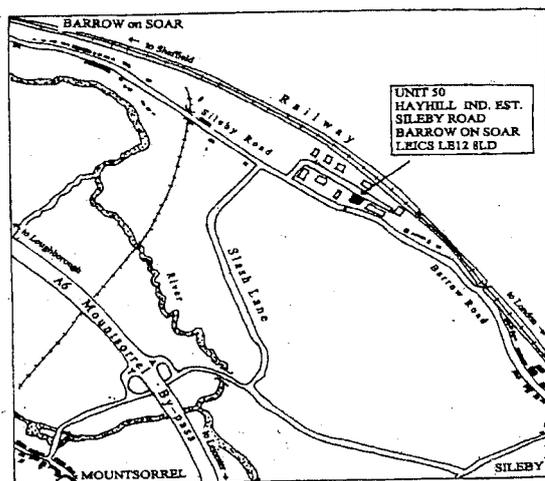
Thurs 17 Feb,

Frank Clark: Ectoparasitic Insects

Thurs 31 Mar

Barrow workshop evening

Below is a map of how to get to The Collection Resources Centre, Barrow on Soar, grid ref. SK593163.



### 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 Email: royfrankum@tiscali.co.uk
Lepidoptera	Adrian Russell, 15 St. Swithin's Road, Leicester LE5 2GE Telephone: 0116 241 5101 Email: adrian@wainscot.demon.co.uk
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