

Autumn/Winter
2013

Derbyshire Biodiversity News

Also available in colour from www.derbyshirebiodiversity.org.uk

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Common Blue (male), Grin Low

This newsletter is aimed at anyone in Derbyshire interested in biodiversity including site rangers, planners, conservation staff, species recorders, local community groups, families and individuals.

Produced by the Lowland
Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnership.
Vol 9/2

New LNR for Derbyshire

There are over 1,500 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) in England covering around 35,000 hectares. They range from windswept coastal headlands, ancient woodlands and flower-rich meadows, to abandoned landfill sites and industrial areas now re-colonised by wildlife.

The latest addition to this list is Grin Low LNR near Buxton. Its declaration earlier this year brings the total number to 48 across Derby and Derbyshire. It is now one of 13 LNRs owned and managed by Derbyshire County Council for the benefit of local communities and for wildlife. The unique site, just south of Buxton, qualified for formal LNR status because of its importance for wildlife, geology, archaeology, education and public enjoyment.



The council's Countryside Service has been looking after the site since the early 1980s, managing its extensive habitats, making improvements to access and working closely with the tenant farmer, who grazes much of the site, plus the Caravan Club, which has a campsite within it.

Speaking on behalf of the Local Authority, Councillor Andy Botham said: *"We are delighted our hard work has been recognised at Grin Low. The really amazing part of this story is the transformation of land scarred by centuries of quarrying and lime burning into a beautiful natural area for wildlife, farming and people. It shows what can be achieved with the right skill, imagination, commitment and investment.. Grin Low is a really special place, with some of Derbyshire's finest wild flower pastures, fascinating historical features, and views from Solomon's Temple."*

To find out more about Derbyshire's countryside sites, visit www.derbyshire.gov.uk/countryside or email countryside@derbyshire.gov.uk

EU tackles Invasive Aliens

The European Commission has just published proposals for tackling the serious threat posed by invading non-native species in the form of a “draft regulation”. It is likely to come into effect in 2016.

Non-native species are any plant or animal introduced outside its natural past or present range. But it's only the really invasive ones that cause us problems.

There are probably over 12,000 non-native species in Europe, of which the majority pose no significant threat. However, around 10-15% of these - known in the UK as Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) - will cause significant environmental, economic or social damage. Japanese Knotweed is a good example of the problem. It was introduced to Britain in the 19th century as an ornamental plant and has since spread widely across a range of habitats, being incredibly difficult to remove. It causes very significant environmental and economic damage, estimated to cost the British economy £166 million per year.

The EU proposals centre on what some regard as a rather limited ‘list’ of around 45 or so of the most problematic invasive non-native species.

For those selected, stringent restrictions will come into force, preventing them being imported, transported, sold, exchanged, kept or grown, allowed to reproduce or released into the environment.

The proposals also set out a framework for:

- eradication of listed species when first detected;
- longer term management of listed species;
- restoration of damaged ecosystems caused by listed species;
- action to address priority pathways along which invasive non-native species spread;
- provision for individual Member States to take action to address intentional releases of invasive non-native species of particular concern to them.

Of course, what we all want to know is which species will be included. It appears this won't be drawn up until after the regulation comes into force, probably around 2016.

Defra will be leading the negotiations on the draft regulation on behalf of the UK Government.

One plant liable to be included in the first listing is Ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*) which causes misery to millions in Hungary because of allergic reactions to its pollen. The plant is spreading here, although the Flora of Derbyshire project so far only has a handful of records for our county.



Ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*)
- not to be confused with Ragwort!

More information is available from this link - <http://bit.ly/EUinvasives>

Species-Rich? Annual LBAP Forum 30th November

This year's Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Forum will be held at County Hall, Matlock on Saturday 30th November from 10-4.15pm

With a theme based around 'Species', there will be talks from a range of county experts, plus morning and afternoon workshop sessions.

Our main speaker is Tim Birch, formerly of Greenpeace, but now the new Conservation Manager at Derbyshire Wildlife Trust who leads on their badger vaccination campaign. Like most of us, he is concerned at the decline of many species, both globally and locally and will be asking whether species and conservation are at a crossroad. There are six options for the two workshop sessions, covering aspects of surveying, identification, conservation, and education. At least ten speakers have agreed to contribute to the programme, and there will be an opportunity to view displays and stands at breaks and lunchtime.

The event is free, and a buffet lunch is provided. Booking is essential so we know which workshops you'd like to attend, or if you plan to bring a display or need a table for sales.

A flyer & booking form can be downloaded from www.derbyshirebiodiversity.org.uk using links from the homepage. **Please book by 18th Nov.**

Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Partnership Forum 2013

Species-Rich?

Sat 30th November 2013
County Hall, Matlock
10am - 4.15pm

A programme of talks, workshops and displays, based around a theme of 'Species' Looking at identification, recording, publishing, campaigning and conservation!

This event is generously supported by Derbyshire County Council.

Conference Twitter hashtag: #LDBAP

See back of this Newsletter for contact details Or email biodiversity@derbyshire.gov.uk with any queries.

My First Lifetime Experience: - Wasp Spider

I don't think Dr Willmot expected my exclamation of "Oh wow! Look at that!" Let's face it, Petty Whin (*Genista anglica*) isn't the most stunning of plants. Alan had taken me to see this close relative of gorse growing at a well-known spot at Mercaston Marsh SSSI back in 1996.

But there, suspended in mid-air off one of its branches was *the* most amazing spider I had ever seen. I knew it was unusual, but couldn't remember where I'd seen it before. With its black and yellow 'football jersey' colours and massive web with thick zig-zag of fibres, it could hardly be missed. Picking up my spider ID book later that day, there was its picture on the cover—Wasp Spider (*Argiope bruennichi*). That's where I'd seen it! The book said this European species didn't occur in the UK much further north than the New Forest. But here it was.

Spider expert, Stan Dobson, was delighted to see it, but we could find no more. Nor have we in the years since; it was, and still is, the most northerly UK record.

Nick Moyes



A Future for Elvaston Castle



Derbyshire County Council has been looking for a sustainable way forward for Elvaston Castle and Estate for some years. It is currently working in partnership with the National Trust to secure its future.

They are working together with visitors and other stakeholders to develop a 'Vision and Plan' which will encourage a sustainable future and guide the management of Elvaston Castle and Country Park over the next 10 years.

The plan will cover the buildings, garden and grounds which were saved from almost certain destruction from gravel extraction by its

purchase in 1969 and the creation of one of the first Country Parks in England.

A number of public workshops were held to gather people's ideas for the future of Elvaston during October 2013. And over the next few months these will be used to develop a Draft Vision for the future of Elvaston Castle and Country Park.

The Estate contains important BAP Habitats and Species, as well as a Local Nature Reserve and a RIGS site. For more information, visit www.futureelvaston.co.uk



Biodiversity Offsetting - Licence to Trash?

The Government has just finished consulting on its Biodiversity Offsetting Scheme, despite setting up Pilot Studies which aren't due to report until April 2014.

The idea behind Biodiversity Offsetting is to devise a new way to preserve nature that more accurately accounts for the value to us of the natural world. The mechanism would require developers to provide proper compensation for the damage their actions cause. At the moment it is recognised by many (including government) that the approach taken to compensate effectively for habitat loss is failing both the economy and the environment.

For example, destroying a wood to make way for new houses means the developer would need to provide more woodland elsewhere to replace it, or pay a third party to do so. Supporters suggest there would be "No Net Loss" of biodiversity from development. Others suggest it could just become a "Licence to Trash".

If proposals are taken forward, biodiversity offsets could become one of the most important changes to how decisions affecting the environment are made in Britain. The Lowland Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire Local Nature Partnership have made a submission in time for the end of DEFRA consultation on 7th Nov. Further details: <http://bit.ly/BioOffsetting>

Healthy, Wealthy and . . . DerwentWISE

A partnership which aims to safeguard and restore the iconic landscape of the Lower Derwent Valley has been awarded £1.767 million by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The DerwentWISE partnership, led by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, applied for the funding as part of a £2.45 million, five-year project which involves 14 partners.

The project is about rediscovering and valuing the landscape of the Lower Derwent Valley for its beauty, wildlife and also for its resources of wood, water and stone which have inspired mankind's development through time.

It focuses on the landscape around the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, where the 'factory system' began at the start of the Industrial Revolution.

The area extends from Matlock Bath, with its dramatic limestone gorge, south through a stunningly beautiful wooded river valley broadening into a wide floodplain as it approaches Derby, and on into the city centre.



DerwentWISE has four themes: –

- conserving or restoring heritage,
- increasing community participation,
- improving access,
- learning, training and skills.

Many of the activities are about the hidden or forgotten beauty of the valley. In the woodlands for example there will be projects to remove rhododendron, plant native tree species and open up iconic views over the valley. Arts projects will engage and inspire people about woodlands, and new access routes will be created to enjoy the views. There will be opportunities to learn traditional woodland skills such as coppicing and charcoal-making, while school groups will be taken on visits into the woods to discover and explore these magical places.

Work now starts to recruit staff to deliver the project. This will include a team manager, two community engagement officers and a finance and administration officer.

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's Director of Living Landscapes Matthew Croney tells us he's delighted by this announcement and is looking forward to starting work on the project.

"While the mills of the World Heritage Site are now globally recognised, less attention has been given to the wider landscape, which attracted those industrialists in the first place", he said. "The valley includes lots of forgotten gems such as internationally important ancient woodlands and archaeological sites which date from way before the start of the industrial revolution."

"Unfortunately, it has been slowly deteriorating, often due to unintended damage or neglect. Through this project, we can make a real difference so that this landscape can thrive once again. DerwentWISE has been five years in the making and the partnership would like to sincerely thank everyone who has contributed to it."

Vanessa Harbar, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund East Midlands, added: *"Our countryside is a precious asset under ever-increasing pressure. HLF's Landscape Partnership programme has gone from strength to strength, encouraging long-term partnerships and innovative ways of working. The result has been greater understanding, access and appreciation of our natural environment for the people living and working in and visiting these areas. We're delighted to confirm our support for such an important scheme. This investment will leave a lasting legacy of landscape conservation and management."*

A detailed Landscape Conservation Action Plan, which formed the main basis of the funding application, is available to download from Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's website:

The Flowers of Darley and Nutwood LNR, Derby

Darley and Nutwood LNR is one of ten formally declared 'Local Nature Reserves' in Derby, all owned by the City Council. Here Peter & Christine Hill describe some their recent studies there.

As local residents we had the advantage of visiting the nature reserve regularly in 2012, and recorded a total of 138 wild flower species, of which 20 had not seen in the LNR before. We were unable to find 19 species previously recorded in a 2003 survey and didn't attempt to look for 3 sub-species of brambles found earlier!

The LNR is located on the north side of Derby, adjacent to the River Derwent. (central grid ref: SK355388.) Access is from South Avenue, or from a track following the west bank of the River Derwent from Darley Abbey toll bridge.

An important feature of the reserve is the wide range of habitats within the 10 hectare site. There is small area of old woodland with bluebells and yellow archangel, a swamp area and small stream with a wide range of species including water forget-me-not, water chickweed, bog stitchwort, gipsywort, brooklime, common reedmace, yellow iris, opposite-leaved golden saxifrage and large bittercress, and a large central predominantly grassy area [*a former landfill site—Ed.*] with many flowering plants.

The east and south boundaries are formed by the River Derwent and the southern part of the east boundary is a rich riverine habitat with bird-in-a-bush (*Corydalis solida*), butterbur and ramsons in early spring and subsequently stinging nettles, sweet cicely, bistort, amphibious bistort, marsh woundwort, great willowherb, meadowsweet and hemp agrimony.

We are fortunate to have 4 species of orchids in the LNR. **Common spotted-orchid** was previously recorded only in 1988, but in 2012 (June 11th) we found 3 flower spikes (one solitary pink form and 2 white/purple spikes). **Bee orchids** were noted in 2003 and seem well established. At the peak of their flowering in 2012 (July 1st), we found 41 flowering spikes at 7 locations around the LNR (yellow dots).

The most exciting new plant of 2012 was *Anacamptis pyramidalis*, the **Pyramidal orchid**; it is a rare species in lowland Derbyshire and seeing the group of over 30 rich pink flower spikes during July in 2012 and 2013 was a great



pleasure for us and others. In July 2013 we also came across a single flower spike of **Southern Marsh orchid** which we hope will re-appear in 2014!

Challenges for the years ahead are to continue efforts to control Japanese knotweed and Indian balsam and to assess whether further work is necessary to ensure that the four orchid species can continue to flourish.

We are very grateful to Hans Rieder for developing the Wild Flower Register which is now on the website. We were assisted in our recording by our young grandsons, David and Charlie.

Peter and Christine Hill

Website: <http://darleyandnutwood.org.uk>

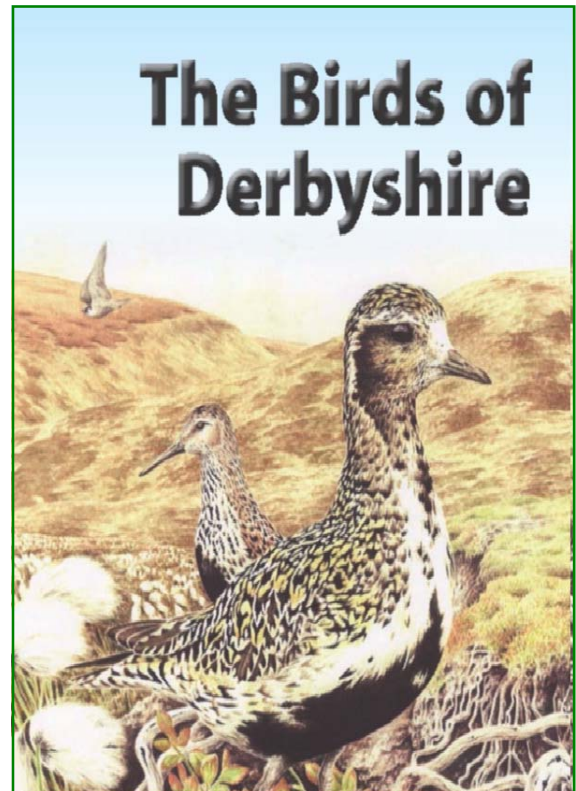
The Birds of Derbyshire

Publication of a long-awaited new avifauna is now very close, with Derbyshire Ornithological Society indicating that 'The Birds of Derbyshire' should be available in December.

The Birds of Derbyshire will be the most comprehensive account of the county's birds ever produced, and is designed to provide an abundance of information for both the serious and armchair birdwatcher.

319 species are included, and the book is beautifully illustrated with both vignettes and colour photographs. There are sections detailing the history of Derbyshire ornithology, the history and role of the DOS and on the county's natural areas and bird habitats. The book is jointly edited by Roy Frost and Steve Shaw, on behalf of DOS, and follows the original 'Birds of Derbyshire', which was published in 1978 and which Roy Frost also edited.

It is a hardback book, retailing at £45 although a pre-publication offer is available until December 1st from the printers, Liverpool University Press. This offer reduces the price to £20 plus £5 p&p with further p&p savings if more than one copy is ordered.



Details and order forms are on the DOS website at www.DerbyshireOS.org.uk or from www.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk or from their stand at the LBAP Annual Forum (see p3)

Highly recommended for the Christmas present list or as a gift to others!

Moving Mountains Nature Network

Here is a curious one-man initiative, trying to bring people together to halt the loss of biodiversity.

Moving Mountains Nature Network was set up by Chris Milward in 2013. He's clearly a man with endless energy and enthusiasm (as he says on his blog), and was moved to action by reading The State of Nature Report, published this year. Chris wants to mobilise a network of "Guardians" to cover as many SSSIs, LNRs, AONBs, RSPB Reserves and other sites as possible.



Chris' Blog at www.movingmountains4nature.blogspot.co.uk

By liaising with the larger bodies he hopes that surveys, education projects and fund-raising campaigns can be co-ordinated and passed down to these guardians. Chris' ambition led him to contact many local authorities and BAP projects, and I promised to mention his efforts. When so many of our existing partnerships and networks have been working away for years to protect our environment, I can't help wondering how he can sustain his efforts alone. But it's great that the decline of so many species, highlighted in The State of Nature

Report, had the power to stir someone to such action.

OPAL Gets a Mint of Money!

The Big Lottery Fund has announced that OPAL (Open Air Laboratories) will receive a grant of £3m to extend its work into Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The OPAL project aims to motivate everyone to discover more about their local outdoor environment and in doing so create a new generation of nature-lovers. Since the project's launch in December 2007 over 750,000 people have taken part in the OPAL programme, discovering more about the environment where they live and work.



OPAL's resources, events, and national surveys equip people with the knowledge and skills to explore, record, and share information about local places and wildlife. Members of the public, schools and community groups have sent OPAL over 50,000 records about the state of our environment, from the soil under our feet to the skies above us. The data are helping scientists track the spread of insect species, understand more about our climate, examine the health of our trees, and build a picture of air, water and soil quality across England.

Thanks to this new award, OPAL will now be able to roll out its activities to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, helping thousands more people engage with the environment in new ways and learn about biodiversity, pollution and climate change.



OPAL National Surveys

- **Soil and Earthworm Survey** – Discover which earthworms live in your local area.
- **Air Survey** – Discover the impacts of local air quality on our natural environment.
- **Water Survey** – What creatures are lurking in your pond and what can they tell us about water quality?
- **Biodiversity Survey** – Learn about the importance of hedges and the wildlife they support.
- **Climate Survey** – Investigate the ways we affect climate and how the climate may affect us.
- **Bugs Count** – Help us investigate how the built environment affects invertebrates
- **Tree Health Survey** – Help us protect our trees by monitoring pests and diseases.

The award will also help us better understand the state of the environment across the UK and how we can best respond to environmental challenges, like climate change, invasive pests and diseases like Ash dieback.

As part of the award the English component of the project will also be extended for the next 3 years, so keep an eye out for events near you. If you are interested in finding out more about the OPAL project and how you can get involved please visit www.opalexplornature.org

To download copies of our national surveys, visit www.opalexplornature.org/surveys where you can also request hard copies of our latest survey Tree Health.

Lauren Gough
OPAL Community Scientist
Lauren.Gough@nottingham.ac.uk

Notice Board and Topical Tweets

Moor like this, please!

Al Jazeera TV features Moorland Restoration in the Peak District

<http://ow.ly/pRXee>

(Shortlink to Moors For The Future)

Moss Valley magic

Over a 5 year period the Moss Valley Wildlife Group has pulled up a gob-smacking 2,675 tons of Himalayan Balsam plants from their river system!

Biodiversity and Urban Design
- an Architect's Guide

New downloadable publication from Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust

<http://bit.ly/BioDesignGuide>

In Canada it is estimated that the Toronto skyline accounts for about 1 million bird deaths a year.

<http://bit.ly/1atSVcA>

(Shortlink to The Ecologist.org)

Sanctuary LNR, Derby

A coalition opposed to plans to build a mile-long cycle race track on a Derby Local Nature Reserve now numbers 10 local and regional conservation groups.

Further info:
TheSanctuaryLNR@gmail.com

Buglife says:

"Over a six-year period, over half (51%) of nearly 200 important brownfield sites in the Thames Gateway area have been lost, damaged or are under threat."

<http://bit.ly/14S2kcw>
(Shortlink to Buglife website)

From Twitter

Where have all the falcons gone? Dramatic decline has set alarm bells ringing among conservationists. #biodiversity

<http://ow.ly/qAER8>

(Shortlink to The Independent)

From Twitter
(@PaulReevesEA)

Had a good meeting today with @DerbysWildlife reviewing #wfd issues identified during the #catchmentwalkover on the River #Ecclesbourne

7 Nov 2013 4:19pm

London is losing Green Space equivalent to two and a half Hyde Parks every year to paving or decking of gardens.
- A study showed that around 500 gardens or parts of gardens are lost to development each year.
(Source: Planning Magazine)



Contact Us

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Nick Moyes

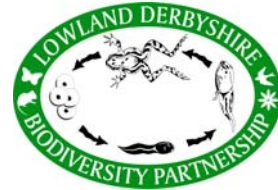
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Deadline for articles for next issue
31st March 2014

www.derbyshirebiodiversity.org.uk



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Picture Acknowledgements

Paul Finn (p1); Anold van Vliet, Wikimedia Commons (p2); Laitche, Wikimedia Commons (p3); Future For Elvaston Castle website (p4); Derbyshire Wildlife Trust website (p5); Getmapping/P&C Hill (p6); Derbyshire Ornithological Society (p7); Moving Monutains website (p7); OPAL (p8).

The Last Word...



This issue of Derbyshire Biodiversity News is much smaller than the previous one, and has been brought out now to ensure those who don't get BAP news and mailshots by email do still get a chance to receive a programme and booking form by post for our Annual Forum. It is short notice for them, but do please try to get booking forms returned on time if you wish to attend.

A big 'thank you' to all Local Groups who have sent back their 'annual returns' to show their achievement's over the last (two) years. We will be asking the bigger conservation organisations for their figures, too, and then collating the results to give an indication of what everyone has achieved over the Lowland Derbyshire BAP region. To hear that just one group in our Partnership has managed to pull up over 2,500 tons of Himalayan Balsam from the Moss Valley over a five year period, yet struggled to find 50 tons to pull up last year is a great testament to the impact that collective action can make. If they carry on just a little bit longer it sounds like the Moss Valley could become virtually Balsam-free!

But not everyone can contribute by active conservation effort. If we want to call ourselves conservationists, we really need to be acting as environmentally as we can in every way. As I whizz home in my family car each night, can I really be smug in the knowledge I've done all I can for the environment? The answer, of course, is no. Every one of us takes out of this planet far more than they ever put back in, no matter how much biodiversity action they undertake. Very few, if any, of the 7 billion human lives on this planet will ever be carbon neutral. But that shouldn't stop us trying.

Whilst I may have solar panels and switched to a renewable electricity supplier, and busily recycle all I can, my existence and lifestyle still has a profound impact on this earth. One amongst 7 billion impacts. Reducing that impact to a minimum is what all conservationist need to do, in all aspects of our lives. And especially after driving home after a long day, thinking they've been saving the planet's biodiversity.

Nick Moyes