

## **Rugby Area Conservation Report – for year 2017**

### **A report of some of the work done by volunteers of Warwickshire Wildlife Trust – Rugby and Butterfly Conservation – Warwickshire**

Phil Parr, WWT - Rugby Conservation Officer, & Butterfly Conservation Rugby Area Liaison Officer, 24<sup>th</sup> Aug 2018

#### **Hours Worked by Wildlife Trust – Rugby Wildlife volunteers**

Rugby Wildlife Groups – Ashlawn, Swift Valley, Cock Robin Wood, & Nature Force,

Hours worked By Rugby Wildlife 2017 – Total **6608** and more than **1324** volunteer visits.

This comprises: - for Ashlawn, 85 work parties and numerous other visits for planning, surveying, and guided walks with Butterfly Conservation (At Malpass and Ashlawn), 3881 hours by 725 Volunteers for Ashlawn Group and WWT Nature Force teams, plus 551 hours by 220 youngsters from Rugby School directed by Steve Wright.

The Ashlawn figures include a great showing from Network Rail who brought 28 enthusiastic volunteers and equipment, completing 196 hrs to open old picnic site at Onley embankment and a glade below it. A very grand total of 4432 hours worked on Ashlawn by 945 volunteers.

Swift Valley NR The Swift group put in 945 hrs, and Nature Force from Brandon recorded 318 hrs, Total = 1,263 hrs. (Number of volunteers not available)

Cock Robin Wood NR 860 hours, 379 attendances & 53 hours for tools & admin.

Hours worked by Rugby Wildlife in Previous years: -

2016 - 5689 Hours, 1517 volunteer visits,

2014 - 4564 Hours, 1191 volunteer visits,

2012 – 2868 Hours, 934 volunteer visits,

2015 – 4780 Hours, 1259 volunteer visits,

2013 - 3873 Hours, 931 volunteer visits,

2011 - 2795 Hours, 842 volunteer visits

#### **Some of the hours worked by Butterfly Conservation – Warwickshire (BC-W) in Rugby Borough.**

The Malpass Site and Newton Cutting each had 11 workparty visits. Site meetings were made to advise on Great Central Walk, Lansdowne Allotments, Linnell Rd Open Space, and Draycote Water.

A total of 226 hours of work involving 15+ volunteers including transect walks.

BC-W also manage several sites on the edges of the borough at Nelson's Wharf Stockton, Draycote disused railway, Paget's Pool and Ryton Meadows.

A quick sum of hours at Ryton Meadows reserve gives a further 1495 hrs.

Seeding at Centenary Park, and work at a landscape level to improve connectivity in Warwickshire gave over 7000 hours in 2017 on a wide range of sites.

**A tremendous effort**, many thanks to everyone involved.

#### **Farewell to Rugby Wildlife Chairman :**

A surprise during the year was Steve Batts decision to up-sticks and move to Fowey in Cornwall. His able



skills have helped create the current success of our Rugby Wildlife group, Ashlawn, other Rugby sites, and also been a great help to Butterfly Conservation – Warwickshire.

Huge thanks Steve.

We met for a farewell do for Steve at The Fighting Cocks pub 13-10-17.

Our chairmanship has been taken on by Ray Hodges, and Steve Wright has stepped in as our main work party leader, and we are most grateful to them both.

**Website** [www.rugbywildlife.info](http://www.rugbywildlife.info)

Jan Elliot our Website Manager continued to do a brilliant job. The website shows the dates of planned walks and work-parties so people can join us, as well as reports from Rugby wildlife sites. It currently receives over 4000 hits per month.

Jan welcomed sightings, reports, and photos that may be used on the website.

**Rugby in Bloom:** We are very pleased that Ashlawn Cutting NR was awarded a Gold and First in the Environmental Category.

Our Swift Valley Group won a Gold award in the Environmental Category.

We were especially pleased that Steve Batt's work with WWT and BC was recognised with a Special Award.

It's great that the hard work put in by all the volunteers is recognised.

This was followed at the end of the awards presentations at Benn Hall by a new award in memory of the late Sean Lawson (Head of Environment and Public Realm for RBC) who died earlier this year, this award being for an 'outstanding contribution to Rugby in Bloom' – three people were recognised including Steve Batt & Steve Wright. Both were delighted but flattered to be recognised. Steve Wright also helps Benn's Friends look after the Millennium Green recreation area off Craven Rd.



Steve Batt receives Special Award



Steve Wright receives Ashlawn Gold



Chris Godden receives Swift Gold

## **The Wildlife Trust Nature Reserves in Rugby**

### **Ashlawn Cutting - Local Nature Reserve**

We started holding regular work parties on Thursdays as well as alternate Sundays.

We did 85 work parties and numerous other visits for planning and surveying.

### **Guided Walks**

Butterfly Conservation - Warwickshire organised guided walks on Ashlawn and the Malpass Site in May, both with input from Rugby Group. The walks were well attended.

Steve B showed the Rotary Club around on 17-6-17, and Rugby Natural History Society visited on 2-9-17.



D14e Steve B leads walk, Jolly's Meadow 17-6-17



F4w The Rugby Natural History Society visit.



### **Seeding north end of Great Central Walk (GCW).**



At the end of April, we joined forces with people from St Peter and St John's Church Gardening Club, Save Central Way Group, and local volunteers, to sow wild flower seed in some areas of the grassland at the north end of the GCW at Abbey St.

### **Other Help with Ashlawn reserve management:**

#### **School groups:**



Rugby School students visit on Wednesday afternoons. They are supervised by a member of their staff, and the project of the day is directed by our Ashlawn leader Steve Wright. They bring tools we gave them previously and carry out various tasks during the year. These included creating a new scallop glade just south of Pytchley Bridge, so scrub can regenerate for smaller nesting birds, dead hedging, and litter picking.

The Trusts Nature Force Team made 2 visits to cut Station Grasslands, Tower Bank, around the seat and marsh edge and pull some of the encroaching Reed mace from Reservoir Pond, all in Section D.

Network Rail De-veg team and other volunteers joined us on 15<sup>th</sup> Mar and the 28 of us made big progress clearing the glade and part of the embankment of our Onley Lane south section G1.

Butterfly Conservation - Warwickshire Branch: set up and monitored a transect walk, and their Conservation Officer visited and gave helpful advice.

RBC flail cut Tennis Meadow when they visited to flail cut the GCW path verges in January.

We later raked the cuttings off the meadow and seeded Yellow Rattle.

Bubbenhall Wood Meadows: Members of our group worked with BC to clear around 4 ponds at the end of April.

CEMEX's Malpass Site, Parkfield Road: We used to manage this site but were grateful when BC offered to take over the task, so we helped BC do brushcutting, coppicing, a guided walk, and other tasks.

Dunchurch Meadow Reserve: We helped WWT to pull Ragwort and brush-cut a number of areas in June.

### **Great Central Walk path improvement:**

We helped with the application of a substantial grant from VEOLIA, the environmental waste management organisation, for a contractor to improve the GCW from Abbey St. and it funded a new surface as far as the Pytchley Bridge, thus getting rid of the wet areas that made walking impossible after heavy rain. The work was carried out by JP Landscapes of Oldbury for RBC and has made a huge difference to accessibility of the reserve. Many more people now visit, some stop to tell us how impressed they are with the new path and also the work we are doing to improve habitats.



D14w, resurfacing path 1-2-17,



D14e, 3-2-17,



& D12, 9-2-17 new 'Long Pond'

**Water Quality:** For years we have campaigned to get sewage leaks at Pytchley Bridge and Great Central station site attended to. It became a big problem in July, a health hazard as well as environmentally damaging.

Dogs regularly go in the open ditch-drains and pools and some drink from it. We have had reports of some dogs not being well afterwards. Children paddle in it and search for pond life.

We took photographs of the polluted water, and after a lot of badgering from us and RBC, eventually got Severn Trent to look at the problem. In August their contractor surveyed and jetted drains flushing the foul water away downstream towards Rains Brook.

We understand they will return to permanently cure the problem, so hopefully work to rectify problem will start soon. Severn-Trent seem to be reluctant communicate.

#### **Antisocial use of GCW:**

We had less problems with lads riding motorcycles, but horse riders continue to use GCW despite notices telling them it's forbidden, and they are thought to be responsible for repeatedly cutting off locks on the Onley Lane gate. We have been asked to take photographic evidence but not approach them. Police from Rugby Town East group patrol when there are problems and RBC are taking further measures.

**Camping:** A tent was put up in the north east corner of the Healthy Living Walk (HLW) and was thought to be lived in by people working at Dirft. RBC has arranged for a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to be issued. A PSPO is intended to deal with a nuisance or problem in an area that is detrimental to the local community's quality of life.

**Grassland Management:** We decided to leave cutting of some areas until the spring, and others until late summer.

The bulk of it will still be done in the autumn. This is to create greater diversity, and help species hibernating in clumps of grass, and over-wintering eggs on the vegetation. The grass was lush after an inclement summer.

Steve W and Ray H did the bulk of the cutting work while the rest of us raked and carried. The autumn was kind to us and we got all we wanted to do done before Christmas.

**Station Platform Grassland.** This dry grassland has interesting species, but unfortunately the new path has taken up about 30% of it when the surface there was already firm and path good. Common Blue used to breed near the bridge, so we hope it can be persuaded to come back.

**Station Grassland** D14w: Management is undertaken by Nature Force and they did it on 4<sup>th</sup> October



D14w Nature-Force action 4-10-17, D14e raking Tennis Meadow 22-1-17. D14w, delicate Hop Trefoil, 8-7-17



Tennis Meadow D14e: was cut by Rugby Borough Council (RBC) in January when they cut Ashlawn verges. We raked the meadow afterwards to reduce the nutrients returning to the soil to help increase numbers of wild flowers

National Grow-Wild Scheme: 'Grow Wild' is a project for community groups to bring people together to transform a communal space by sowing and growing UK native wild flowers and plants, and is funded by the Nation Lottery and promoted by the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew

We were provided with seeds and so beds were prepared at the north end of Tennis Meadow which 60 years ago was a field grazed by cattle. Among the seeds may be Annual flowers which put on a show in their first summer and quickly produce seed, which then grows into new plants the following year. Perennial flowers in the mix will wait to burst into flower in their second summer - and carry on for many years beyond, too.

Biennial flowers grow in their first year but don't flower and produce seeds until their second year, although some occasionally defy convention by acting like annuals. After producing seeds, these plants usually die in the same way as an annual.

During the year the plots were tended to remove unwanted invasive weeds. We were very pleased with the resultant show of flowers. It was admired by the many walkers, and we will nurture it for future years and may prepare other patches nearby.



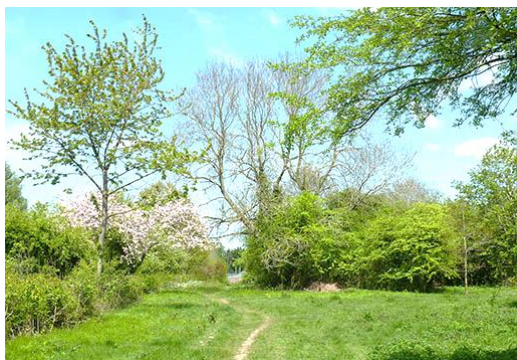
D14e Preparing for Grow Wild seed 19-3-17,



Grow-Wild patch success 21-6-16,

We prepared an area at the north end of Tennis Meadow and seeded various species of cornflowers supplied by the Nation Grow-Wild scheme. The results were spectacular, and some of the flowers continued to make a good display until mid-November.

Jolly's Meadow had very good numbers of Tufted Vetch and Knapweed this year but increase in Melilot is a concern.



D14e Jolly's Meadow. 5-5-17,



D14e Clearing Creeping Thistle not deterred by rain,



D14e, HLW, Stunning Restharrow 13-7-17 PP0448



### Healthy Living Walk (HLW) D14e:



Margaret deals with excess thistles.

In June we seeded Yellow Rattle. In July we spent several sessions pulling excess amounts of Creeping Thistle and in December cut and raked off rank vegetation. Fortunately, there were no problems with wasps nests this year.

Ashlawn Bridge reserve entrance Z path F5e: In October we improved the grassland and made another view point, so the reserve is seen as you walk in.



F4e Grassland management 7-9-17,



F4e Malcolm clears ragwort 7-9-17,



F3w Ray cuts scallop 21-9-17



F3w Malcolm, a big load 10-8-17



F5w 15-10-17 more management



E9 grassland management 26-11-17

**Scrub and woodland management**, hedging, and glade/scallop creation was done over the period when the birds weren't nesting.



E7e new scallop in woodland 5-3-17



F5w dead hedging on a rainy day j26-1-17



D14e Steve does paper work 22-1-17



### Onley Glade G1:



This part of the reserve to the south of Onley Lane had been neglected for some years so we held several work parties there and were joined by Network Rail's impressively hard-working group on March 15<sup>th</sup> and 28 of us made big progress clearing the glade and east side of the embankment.

Pete Thorne made a visit bringing a chain saw to tackle work we would have found difficult. Thanks Pete.

BC supplied us with a couple of Common Buckthorns to plant, so more Brimstone butterflies can breed. In December an owl box was provided by The Trust and fixed in place to the west of the embankment.

### **Marsh Management**

Weevils licenced by DEFTA, to control and hopefully eliminate the alien *Azolla* aquatic fern, were introduced by WWT in June. They seemed to much reduce it as the year progressed, but in spring 2018 we noticed it in the scrape nearest Pytchley Bridge, and again in the marsh. It was a mistake to put all the weevils in the same area.

It may well spread by spores but could otherwise be carried by dogs and swimming wildlife.

*Azolla* originates in the Americas and was first recorded in the UK in around 1840. *Azolla* has escaped from gardens into the wider environment, becoming a problem on ponds, lakes, rivers and canals throughout the UK, including areas of conservation importance such as the New Forest. In April 2014, legislation was introduced that bans the sale of this and four other invasive aquatic plants in the UK. It has a remarkable ability to multiply; fronds grow rapidly and elongate until fragments finally break off to form new plants. The mats that form on the water's surface can be 30cm thick, and during hot weather, can double in size in just 4 or 5 days. These mats:

- - block out light, killing our rich and diverse aquatic flora
- - reduce the oxygen availability which can lead to the death of fish and invertebrates
- - can impede flood defences and water-based recreation, and block irrigation pumps
- - can cause livestock deaths when stock mistake water for land.



D13e A picture of the *Azolla* problem starting to build up, and the Weevil release 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2017. The weevils are tiny, so we hope their larvae have a big appetite!

We hope improved light to the marsh will help our dragonflies and other aquatic species.



Valiant volunteers from Rugby Group and Nature Force worked hard pulling Reed mace from Reservoir Pond 28-5-17, while others cut some of the willow regrowth from the main marsh.

Lady's Smock at the north end of the marsh encouraged Orange-tip butterflies to lay eggs, and a Muntjac resting place discovered on a drier patch in thicker drier vegetation.

## **Species**

**Frogs:** 1203 clumps of spawn were counted by Steve W & Phil in early March. This is an increase of 26 on last year and the highest recorded on the reserve yet.

Most were in Section D between Hillmorton Road and Pytchley Bridges.

There were none in the Station Pools this year as they have become choked with vegetation, but a big increase in nearby Station Marsh since we coppiced the willow to let in more light.

See separate detailed report.



Ashln D14e Reservoir Pond frogs 6-3-17



E7e Scallop, Frog 11-5-17



F3w Toad 14-9-17

**Butterflies:** BC member, Elaine Box again undertook Transect Walks along the length of the reserve during the 26 weeks main flight period. The results contribute to county & national schemes and form the basis of an excellent annual report produced by BC Warwickshire volunteers. She noted Purple Hairstreak high in the Oaks near Pytchley Bridge, and on 3<sup>rd</sup> of August Steve B with Ken M spotted 2 near the Sycamore next to an Oak half way along marsh west bank. This is a new species for the reserve. Holly Blue and Comma did well. Silver-washed were in reasonable numbers. Small Heath continues in low numbers.

**Station Grasslands** had 5 Burnet Companion on 1<sup>st</sup> June and produced its first 2 Common Blues for this year on 27<sup>th</sup> July.

**Tennis Meadow:** the eggs of Common Blue were found on Bird's-foot Trefoil 27<sup>th</sup> August, and 6 flying on with a Brown Argus and Small Copper on 27<sup>th</sup> July and another Brown Argus was photo'd on 18<sup>th</sup> August



D14e, Common Blue on Yellow Rattle & egg case on BFT 27-8-17



a Burnet Companion,



& Six-spot Burnet

**Jolly's Meadow** highlights included a Latticed Heath 19<sup>th</sup> July and a Common Blue on 17<sup>th</sup> Aug

We are working hard to keep and improve numbers of Common Blue, Small Copper, Brown Argus, Burnet Companion and Latticed Heath on the grasslands at this end of the reserve.

We were pleased to record four Silver-washed Fritillary had made it up to this end of the reserve on 21<sup>st</sup> June



Rising water levels on Station Grasslands are a problem for these species as the larval food plants may disappear. Orange-tip had a good year with 14 on 10<sup>th</sup> August but food plant Lady's Smock likes the damp.



Orange Tip 21-5-17, D14e, HLW,



Small Skipper 13-7-17 PP0451,



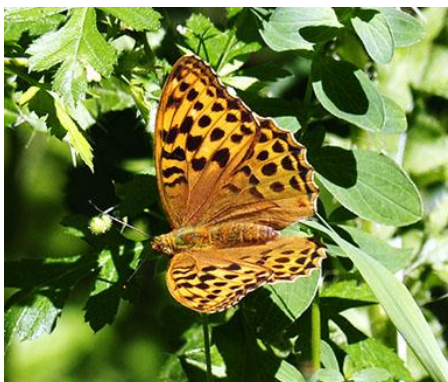
F5e Small Copper 31-8-17



D14e Brown Argus 27-7-17



F3e Small Heath



Silver-washed Frit, f, 2-7-17 M Amos



E7e Comma 17-10-17 PP166

### Moths:



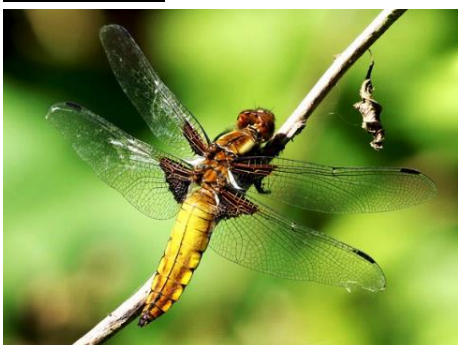
Dot Moth larva on Ploughman's Spikenard 2-9-17, Hummingbird Hawkmoth at Pytchley Br 20-9-17.

A new species to the reserve was Scarlet Tiger. Mrs Allen runs a moth trap in a garden adjacent to the reserve and reported Scarlet Tiger, and noted Small Ranunculus, which David Brown

says are spreading into Warwickshire. Least Carpet, Cypress Carpet and many others were attracted to the lamp.

Burnet Companion and Shaded Broad-bar had a good year, but Lattice Heath were in very low numbers. The colourful Six-spot Burnet have made a quite a comeback with 5 on 8<sup>th</sup> July while the very similar Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet had a very poor year. These grasslands at the northern end of the reserve are important for these species

### Dragonflies:



D14e Broad-bodied Chaser female



D14e Beautiful Demoiselle

We recorded, Four-spotted Chaser, Broad-bodied Chaser, Beautiful Demoiselle, and Large Red damselflies.



**Birds:**

Meadow Pipit and Green Woodpecker, L Hamnett



Buzzard are now well established in the area  
 Raven continue be seen occasionally seen overhead.  
 Kingfisher and Heron visit.  
 A Barn Owl was reported at the south end of the reserve.  
 Willow Tit has been recorded several times

G1 Onley Glade, Putting up owl box 21-12-17

**Mammals:**

**Hedgehogs:** WWT's Hedgehog Officer Debbie, helped by some of us, set up 3 hedgehog footprint traps, but only wood mice were detected. Traps were at D14e Tennis Meadow, E9w Section 9, F4w Section 4. A dog walker reported seeing 2 hedgehogs at the bottom of the zigzag path, and we later set up one of the traps near there, but again, only mice recorded.

We get reports of one or two hedgehogs nearby, notably from Catesby Rd and the Southfields Estate, but fences limit access and Badgers live in the Cutting. D14e Tennis Meadow: WWT Hedgehog officer Debbie sets footprint trap 18-9-17

**Bats:** Warden Cyril Cleaver reported Pipistrelle's and other large bats flying in and above his garden which backs on the Cutting near Section 9 (E9e)

**Muntjac:** continue to pop out of the undergrowth and we often get reports from walkers. A sleeping 'nest' was found on a dry patch in deeper vegetation at the north end of Pytchley Marsh.

**Roe Deer:** Members of the public occasionally report seeing them.

**Wild flowers:**

An increase in the number of violets was noted which is good news for Silver-washed Fritillary.

A single plant of Weld has appeared on the station platform, a new species for the reserve.

A bush of 'Granny's curls' (Pheasant Berry) was found at the south end of the HLW

We were pleased to see an area of white violets has reappeared just N. of Ashlawn Bridge.

51 Southern Marsh Orchids were growing at Station Pools. The first one appeared here in 2016

Ploughman's Spikenard fared poorly on Section 4e where there were 20 plants a year or two back, but several appeared at the bottom of the Z path F5e.





D15w Station Pools, Southern Marsh Orchids 28 -5-17,



D14e Marsh Woundwort 27-7-17



E6e White Violets 15-3-17



D14e Michaelmas Daisy 22-10-17,



D14e HLW, Purple Loosestrife 22-8-17, D14e Agrimony 21-6-16,



D14e HLW, Hawthorn berry crop looks good for this winter 22-8-17



Fungi Rugby fungi expert David Champion was pleased to find uncommon Scaly Hedgehog (Phaeomarasmius ericinaceus), He also verified Elf Cap, & Velvet-shank.



E7e Scarlet elf cup 18-1-17



D14w Scaly Hedgehog,



E9w Velvet-shank, S Batt 19-1-17,



D15e Sulphur Tuft by tennis bank 23-4-17,



D14w Myxomycetes a slime mould 3-10-17.



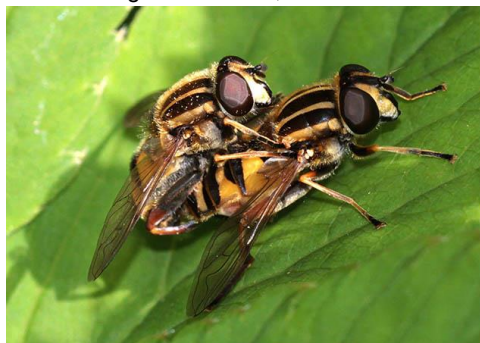
F4e a Foliose Lichen 7-9-17



## Bug's:



D14e HLW Meadowsweet & Hawthorn Shield bug 21-8-17 SW, D14e Blue Shield Bug 24-10-17, A Ground Beetle 21-5-17



Wasp Beetle 21-5-17 the larvae live in warm, dry, dead wood, & favour willow and birch.

Hover Flies mate 21-5-17

Common Green Grasshopper



A Wolf Spider missing legs 21-5-17, F5w Green Lacewing 19-6-17, D14 Hornet mimic hoverfly 17-7-17

## Newbold Quarry Park LNR

The Trust are organising a series of work parties here, and they have been well attended. Nearby resident John Rix continues to provide some much-needed butterfly records with Ringlet and Large White the most seen, a few Common Blue, and Red Admirals increased in numbers towards the autumn.

## Swift Valley Park LNR



Steve & Neville admire just installed benches,



Martin Ogden brush-cuts,



Painted Lady



**Swift Valley report for 2017** (Neville Weston) For full report see separate document.

Following the (Health & wellbeing) project run from Brandon to encourage volunteering our numbers swelled from 9 to about 19. Over the past year although we lost 4 of those recruits, we have maintained 12 regular & another 6 occasional contributors at years end.

Our focus over last winter (16/17) was hedgelaying the North boundary of the Dog exercise field, a huge task even just thinning the hedge due to a lot of old, hard and decaying wood. I have to say a fantastic effort was put in by the whole group finishing the project in the nick of time just before the breeding bird surveys. To see it reinvigorated with new growth coming through has been a treat.

Perhaps in time the internal hedges that we are now in the process of laying may reduce maintenance work and cost, as not requiring the need for stock fencing on both sides of hedges.

Into Spring and Summer, we trim and maintain pathways with occasional cutting back of overhanging branches and foliage. Mid to late summer is involved the control of some plant species, including Ragwort and Dock.

The Ragwort problem in Field 4 had become too much for our group to control, so, in years 16/17 Brandon stepped in with controlled weed wiping and mowing, and we look forward to seeing the results this year. In Field 1, 2 & 3 the previous years of hard labour removing the Ragwort before seeding has proved a success, with the group having to contribute a lot less hours dedicated to this unpopular task. The Docks remain a concern.

As I reported last year the perennial problem with leakage from the canal in Field 3 is still a concern with over a third of the field waterlogged. Karl was in the process of claiming some compensation monies and I was informed that there were plans to effect repairs to damaged areas and create a run off channel and drainage pond. Nothing more was forthcoming so perhaps Karl will update us.

Unfortunately, not all the Breeding bird surveys were completed in the Spring of 17 but the results we had were reported to the BTO.

A full summer of Butterfly surveys were carried out and it was nice to see the small species making a slight recovery from the dramatically reduced numbers of 2016.



Swift Valley again won a Gold Award through Rugby in Bloom. It's so nice that all the Volunteer's hard work is appreciated.

Money awarded from the Tesco Bag scheme, provided interactive information stations around a walk with signage at the entrance, and new benches at the Bird feeder complete with just the two information boards to be finished. Our thanks go to Faye Irvine at Brandon for driving this initiative.

Ongoing work for winter 17/18 Hedgelaying (a popular task), coppicing, and thinning the woodlands, together with clearing fallen trees and branches Small Copper Butterfly from the recent storms. Our thanks to Rugby Borough Council, Brandon, and Nature Force for their continued support. Swift Valley report by N. Weston

**Cock Robin Wood NR.** (Derek Lill)

For full report see separate document

Derek Lill, Volunteer Work Party Leader reports that there are 11 regulars who have clocked up 379 attendances, a total of 860 hours. 53 hours have been put in maintaining tools and doing admin. He thanks them all for their help and friendship

Litter picking: is a regular first task. The car park is the main problem with the rest of the wood remaining clear except for the odd cigarette packet - often stuffed into trees etc - all very strange!!

Hedges: Another stretch of hedging was completed before Christmas



Woodland: This year the heavy wet snow brought down several large trees and large branches from two of the mature willows. This took time to make safe and clear.

Fortunately, Ian has now got his chainsaw ticket, and this has made the work less demanding.

In conjunction with Eddie at the Trust & RBC, a felling and thinning licence has been granted so the woodland can be thinned to benefit the remaining trees and allow better ground flora.

It is anticipated that work will start next autumn and may take a couple of seasons to complete.

Bird boxes were cleaned and sprayed, and where necessary our special anti-squirrel plates attached.

There was no evidence this year of failed nests but some of the boxes were not used

Much work is to be done to identify the apple tree species, prune, and clear around them to allow them to flourish.

This year the scallops have been left to their own devices.

Some trees planted by RBC in inappropriate places had been vandalised so were transplanted in the hope that they would survive.

Encroachment: by some home owners remains an issue but no one in authority seems bothered.

Small/seasonal pond: Further work was done to remove pockets of the invasive aquatic alien New Zealand Pigmyweed. This effort seems to be bearing fruit and we are hopeful that the frog spawn and tadpoles will survive better this year.

Vandalism: This year we have suffered with a marked increase in vandalism. In particular, use of the main pond as a swimming pool and a large fire in the lower compartment.

Dealing with broken trees, and clearing large numbers of bottles, and discarded clothing took up valuable time.

Derek Lill - Cock Robin Wood Voluntary Warden

Full report compiled by Phil Parr, WWT - Rugby Wildlife Conservation Officer, & Butterfly Conservation Rugby Area Liaison Officer, 17<sup>th</sup> June 2018

Credits and thanks are due to photographers Steve Wright, Steve Batt, Ken Monk, Lance Hamnett, Dave Champion, and Neville Weston.

We are most grateful to all the many volunteers who have helped improve Rugby wildlife areas, whether for the benefit of wildlife or amenity.

We have enjoyed doing it, and hope you have.

Thankyou.

Phil Parr for Rugby Wildlife