



# NBRC Newsletter 01

April 2009

**Welcome!** This is the first newsletter of the Northamptonshire Biodiversity Records Centre (NBRC). We thought it was time to give you some news about where the NBRC got to. We are planning to put a newsletter together twice a year. One around April and one around October. The later one will be slightly different as it will focus more on the species found during the year. Any feedback is welcome!

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## NBRC Update

*This section will be used to give you an update of the NBRC activities. We would like to briefly outline the history of the NBRC here.*

The NBRC is hosted by The Wildlife Trust. It all started in January 2006 when we had some funding secured for two years which enabled the creation of a full time Biodiversity Data Officer. This post was shared between Will O'Connor and myself, Nathalie Hueber, up to April 2007. When Will left I took the position full time. Since then Rachel Tate has been employed on a part-time basis from October 2007.

Initially the establishment phase of the NBRC was planned for the first nine months. Then when additional funding had been secured the NBRC was expected to move to the operational phase with a dedicated manager. Unfortunately this has not happened yet and the NBRC is still in the establishment phase with no dedicated manager and no formal "launch".

Most of the Local Record Centres (LRC) nationally are supported by their local authorities and this is where they get their main source of income. Currently none of the local authorities in Northamptonshire supports the NBRC.

During 2007 Natural England put together a memorandum of agreement with all LRCs giving each one of them £15,000 a year for a period of two years. One of the conditions was for the LRC to make datasets available on the NBN Gateway. We would then give them permission to access the

records through the NBN Gateway at full resolution which is a higher resolution than the one otherwise available for members of the public (for information on the Gateway please visit <http://data.nbn.org.uk/>).

The timing was perfect as we were getting to the end of the initial two years' funding. Alongside this source of income the NBRC gets some of its resources from the reports that we prepare for consultant ecologists in relation to development.

Natural England will continue its support to all LRC for another two years. The NBRC is welcoming this opportunity especially as the signs of recession are starting to show up: the number of consultant enquiries has dropped over the last few months.

We would like to take this occasion to thank The Wildlife Trust for their support. We now have an office dedicated to the NBRC in Lings House as well as additional financial support.



Female Minotaur Beetle (*Typhaeus typhoeus*) found at Lings on 31/03/2009 by Mark Fyfe. This is the second record for Lings LNR in Northampton.

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## NBRC Projects

*This section will be used to describe the major projects that the NBRC is planning to undertake for the forthcoming year.*

Back in 2006 we started to collect a large number of records from most of you. We would like to thank all of you for the interest and help given to the NBRC in those early days. Since then we have managed to process a large amount of data related

to the Wildlife Sites surveys. As we are finishing processing this huge dataset, we will be able to free up more time for processing the collected records. However it will take us sometime to catch up with all of you so please be patient with us. The good news is that thanks to Rachel Tate and Brian Laney we are now fully up to date with the Reptiles and Amphibians datasets. This year the NBRC is planning to:

- Finish the validation of the Bird Club records from the year 2000 onwards and import them into our Recorder Database.
- Carry on the digitisation of the Macro Moth records.
- Exchange all plants records with the Northamptonshire Flora Group for the preparation of the updated flora for the county.
- Align our database with the one used by the Northamptonshire Diptera Group.
- Export our Local Wildlife Site Survey data to the NBN Gateway. The Bird Club dataset and the Amphibians and Reptiles dataset will follow.



Four-coloured Cuckoo Bee (*Bombus Sylvestris*) found at lings on 01/04/2009 by Nathalie Hueber. I believe this is the first record for the county. Please let me know otherwise.

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## Wider LRC News

*This section will keep you updated on the wider national picture about LRCs and the NBN Gateway. We would like to briefly outline the Northamptonshire Biodiversity Partnership here.*

Following good practice from elsewhere in the country, the Northamptonshire Biodiversity Action Plan, the Northamptonshire Biodiversity Records

Centre and the Northamptonshire Local Wildlife Sites have now been formally brought together within the Northamptonshire Biodiversity Partnership.

The Northamptonshire Biodiversity Partnership brings together a wide range of partners and coordinates action, information gathering and advocacy. It is taken forward by a steering group, which was formalised last year.

The NBRC working group is a subset of the Biodiversity Partnership steering group and now meets four times a year. Its main task is to set priorities within the limited resources.

It has been decided that rather than creating a logo for the NBRC, we would use the Biodiversity Partnership logo. The NBRC website would be hosted within the Biodiversity Partnership website too. You can have a look at it here:

[www.northamptonshirebiodiversity.org](http://www.northamptonshirebiodiversity.org)

Our part of the website is still under construction and we would welcome your feedback and ideas. We would like to make sure that you find it useful.

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## Local News

*This section will be an opportunity for you to highlight anything that you would like to share with other recorders.*

The Rare plant Register for Northamptonshire has now been published thanks to the work of Rob Wilson, Gill Gent and others. If you would like a copy please let us know and we'll pass your contact details on to Rob Wilson.

Volume two of the Illustrated Book of Macro moths found in Northamptonshire is now available. The book is £4.95. If you would like a copy please let us know and we'll pass your contact details on to Derek Larkin.

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## Survey Focus

*This section will be specific to the April/March newsletter and will highlight any planned field trips/surveys for the summer.*

## BioBlitz

We would like to organise a BioBlitz this summer. A BioBlitz is a 24-hour inventory of all living organisms in a given area. So from a Friday at 4pm to a Saturday at 4pm we would like to invite you all to one of the Trust reserves to have a look at a wide range of species. If it is very successful maybe we could do more than one next year.

We would like to make sure that everyone who wants to attend will be able to make it. So we have chosen four dates in the hope that one of them will be suitable for everybody. Please do let us know (by Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2009) which dates you would be able to make:

- Friday 12<sup>th</sup> / Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2009
- Friday 10<sup>th</sup> / Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2009
- Friday 17<sup>th</sup> / Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2009
- Friday 31<sup>st</sup> July / Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> August 2009

We would like to organise the day at a site where little data has been collected. The location will be confirmed later as we are hoping to organise it at a new reserve.

## Butterflies transects

Julian Bull is organising butterfly transects for the whole county. Butterfly transects have been walked for many years but they have been in a fairly limited number of locations. To address this, the Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS) was set up and a very successful trial was run last year. The design of the project is based on the BTO's bird surveys, using 1km grid squares chosen at random. The commitment is limited to walking transects twice as a minimum during the summer. A reconnaissance visit during May is also necessary.

The full survey is being run this year and volunteers with a reasonable knowledge of butterfly identification are very welcome. For further details see the website at [www.ukbms.org/wcbs.htm](http://www.ukbms.org/wcbs.htm), or e-mail [survey@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:survey@butterfly-conservation.org).

## OPAL Soil and Earthworm Survey

OPAL (Open Air Laboratories) is an exciting new initiative which has received a grant from The Big Lottery Fund. It is encouraging people to get in touch with nature by enabling them to explore and study their local environments. Through partnerships nation-wide, OPAL is running fun, free projects which anyone can get involved with. From March to May 2009 you can take part in the Soil and Earthworm Survey. This survey aims to find out more about soil and earthworms across

England and will help to ascertain whether or not each species is found in a particular habitat or soil type. There are 26 different species of earthworms in Britain, 12 of which are common.

For more information or if you would like to take part please visit [www.opalexplorenature.org](http://www.opalexplorenature.org). It is great fun! When I did it in my garden I had lots of Red Mason Bees (*Osmia rufa*) the next day which were collecting mud from the pit.



Red Mason Bee (*Osmia rufa*) collecting mud from my garden in Northampton on 21/04/2009.

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## Meet your fellow recorders

*This section will enable you to present yourself to the rest of the community. We would like to present ourselves to start with.*

### Nathalie Hueber

I did a degree in molecular biology while I was in France. After moving to England I started my career in nature conservation with a volunteer placement at BTCV in Northampton in 2003. After enjoying six months of community work and practical conservation I moved on to The Wildlife Trust in Northampton where I became an Ecology Groups volunteer for over a year gaining more specific knowledge with ecological surveys and monitoring. I joined Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre in 2005 as an Environmental Records Assistant. Working on a part-time basis I also became employed in 2006 by The Wildlife Trust in Northampton where I was involved in the establishment of the NBRC. In 2007, I resigned from my position of Environmental Records Assistant in Buckinghamshire and became a full time Biodiversity Data officer at the NBRC where I have been since.

I have a particular interest in recording plants including mosses and liverworts. I love taking pictures of invertebrates and I also enjoy finding out

what they are. Over the past few years I have gained a lot of experience with Microsoft Access databases.

### **Rachel Tate**

The majority of my working life has been spent in the retail/administration sector. After having children I made the decision to return to college and embark on a career change. During my studies I volunteered for a brief period with the Reserves team at The Wildlife Trust in Northampton. I resumed my volunteering with The Wildlife Trust on a part-time basis in 2006 after completing my degree in Environmental Management. Initially I spent the majority of my time involved with practical conservation tasks on the Trust reserves and in 2007 I began to spend some of my volunteer time working in the Records Centre which led me to my current position as a part-time Biodiversity Data Officer.

My main species of interest are reptiles and amphibians and last year I took part in the NARRS recording scheme. I also volunteer for the Bat pathfinding project carried out by the Ecology Group and would love to have time to learn more about the ecology and identification of spiders.

### **Eric Franklin, David Hill-Towers, Julian Bull and Carol Wingate**

We would like to say a special thank you to Eric Franklin, David Hill-Towers, Julian Bull and Carol Wingate for volunteering with us in the office. From data input to record sorting we would not be able to operate without all of you as we have such a limited amount of staff time.



Bird's-foot (*Ornithopus perpusillus*) found at Lings on 26/04/2008 by Gill Gent. This is the first record at Lings since Druce Flora.

## **Final note**

We would like to keep your contact details in our mailing list. Please let us know if you do not want us to keep your details in this way. Also if you are not currently on the list and would like to be then let us know.

Eventually we would like to set up a forum or a discussion group somewhere on the internet. Would this be something in which you would like to participate? Any feedback and ideas would be greatly appreciated.

Some of you expressed some interest in an annual recorders' meeting. Do let us know if you would like the NBRC to organise such a meeting and if so what format you would like it to take.

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## **Contact Detail**

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**I wish you all a good survey season!**

Nathalie Hueber