



# *Friends of* **Earlham Cemetery**

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## *In this issue:*

**Summer Drought  
Reveals Long Lost Plant** 2

Ian Senior

**Wildlife Highlights 2022** 3

Vanna Bartlett

**Species Focus:  
Brimstone Butterfly** 8

Alysia Schuetzle

## *Contribute:*

if you would like to submit an article, photo, or sighting to the newsletter, please send all submissions to [alysia.schuetzle@gmail.com](mailto:alysia.schuetzle@gmail.com), with photos at 300 dpi where possible.

You are receiving this newsletter as part of your membership of the Friends of Earlham Cemetery Group. If you wish to cancel your membership, please contact

[friendsofearlhamcemetery@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:friendsofearlhamcemetery@yahoo.co.uk)



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## *Hello!*

Welcome to issue eighteen of the newsletter for the *Friends of Earlham Cemetery*.

At last - spring seems to be here! After what feels like a rather long, cold, and damp winter, many seasonal plants are starting to come into flower, while more insects seem to be on the wing every day.

With sunny days becoming more frequent and wildlife tentatively emerging, there are more reasons than ever to explore the cemetery. In case you need any inspiration for your wander, check out Vanna's round up of her wildlife discoveries from last year on **page three**.

Visit **page two** to read about Ian's fantastic discovery of a plant not recorded in the cemetery for nearly thirty years.

As always, it would be great to hear your stories about Earlham Cemetery, or about any wildlife or plants you have spotted while exploring.

Please send all articles and images to [alysia.schuetzle@gmail.com](mailto:alysia.schuetzle@gmail.com).

All the best,

*Alysia*

# Summer Drought Reveals Long Lost Plant

Ian Senior

*Ian lives close to Earlham Cemetery and over the last few years has been attempting to re-find all plant species that are known to have been present in the cemetery up to 2008. This summer, he discovered a plant lost since the 90s - Burnet Saxifrage (*Pimpinella saxifrage*).*

The original plant listing the Friends of Earlham Cemetery have compiled by Craig Robson, who spent many hours plant hunting across the site from 1984 to when he moved away from the area in 2008. His list of 210 taxa, including trees and non-native species, was the result of this work. This list was the basis for my own search; over the last four years or so I have relocated many of these original records. Most have been easy as there are still lots around on the site. Others have proven elusive, but I have eventually spotted them lurking in the undergrowth, hiding on walls or even in open areas when I've wondered how I missed them!

There are two 'fabled plants' that were listed as being present on the County Wildlife site citation for the site written in 1997. These are *Succisa pratensis* (Devil's-bit Scabious) and *Pimpinella saxifrage* (Burnet Saxifrage). Neither have been seen since the 90s as far as we know, and Craig didn't find them in his searches either.

Summer 2022 was very notable for both the extreme heat and dryness that we experienced from May to September. The summer peaked when we reached an astonishing 40.3°C on 19th July at Coningsby (Lincolnshire). Norwich peaked at 37°C, which is

still pretty hot! As a result of the heat and drought our gardens gradually turned brown and crisped up as plants struggled to survive in the heat. In Norwich, we barely had any rain for months. Grass growth stopped which meant the mowers were silenced and flowering of all but the deepest-rooted species declined or even halted. Grasslands turned brown with just these deep-rooted species toughing it out in the summer heat, little islands of colour in a sea of brown.

I work from home and most lunchtimes I nip to the cemetery for a quick wander to see what I can find. On one such wander in mid-August I was wandering around the newer sections of the site when I spotted a plant growing in the brown grass which I didn't immediately recognise. On close inspection it turned out to be one of the fabled plants: *Pimpinella saxifrage* (Burnet Saxifrage). Result! Now I had spotted one, more came

into focus and I realised there was a small colony of these plants all around me. I found 12 in all spread over a small area of about 6m x 3m with a couple of outlying plants beyond this tiny group. It's a plant that can cope well in dry conditions and is often found on dry chalk or limestone grasslands in places like the Chilterns. In Norfolk it is widespread and grows in established grasslands which are base-rich sites.

Under normal summer conditions, the grass in this area of the cemetery is regularly cut down but due to the summer drought the Council had stopped mowing as there was the danger that hot machines could start a serious grass fire across the site. This gave *Pimpinella* an opportunity to grow and flower which it hasn't had for a while and me the opportunity to re-find one of the fabled 'lost plants' of Earlham cemetery. Now on to re-find *Succisa pratensis*!





# Wildlife Highlights 2022

## Vanna Bartlett

Read on for Vanna's annual roundup of her wildlife sightings in Earldham Cemetery, highlighting new and interesting species found in 2022.

Left: Male Kite-tailed Robberfly (*Machimus atricapillus*) with *Syrphus* sp hoverfly, showing what consummate predators these flies are in tackling such large prey. The long hot summer resulted in this species being recorded well into October.

After a great start with high numbers of over-wintering ladybirds, the year was beset with high summer temperatures and prolonged drought that had a devastating impact on various insects. This will doubtless have a knock-on effect into the current year (2023). It wasn't all doom and gloom though. Ian Senior reported the first known sighting of Small Heath butterfly (*Coenonympha pamphilus*) in the cemetery. The prolonged dry weather and instances of field fires around the county led to a cessation of mowing because of the potential risk of fire. This meant that there was a late flourish of flowers which was hugely beneficial to the few insects that were struggling to stay alive and probably helped account for Ian's sighting.

## Beetles

As previously mentioned, ladybird numbers were very good in the first months of the year and two of the more interesting beetle species were again found in the cemetery, *Phloiophilus edwardsii* and the Lesser Thorn-tipped Longhorn (*Pogonocherus hispidus*), reported on in a previous newsletter.

In March, after a lot of searching, I finally found Larch Ladybird (*Aphidecta oblitterata*). There is just one previous record of this smallish and rather nondescript species from 2003 and I had long wanted to establish whether it was still present or not. Sulphur Beetles (*Ctenopus sulphureus*) were seen for the first time, with several on Yarrow flowers. To be fair, these were seen in the area of the cemetery outside the ring road in an area I don't often visit so it is possible that they have been there other years. Another interesting little beetle was *Cartodere bifasciata*, a native of Australia that was accidentally imported into Germany in the late 19th century with stored tobacco products. From there it spread around Europe and ultimately most of the globe. Not bad for a creature around only 2mm long!



Above: Larch Ladybird tucked between the scales of a Larch cone.



Above: Sulphur Beetle on Yarrow.

## Diptera (Flies)

One of the most important finds was the discovery of a male *Mallota cimbiciformis* hoverfly around one of the Native Black Poplar trees. This is a very scarce species in Norfolk. Known as the Rot-hole Hoverfly, this species



Left: Small Heath butterfly



# Wildlife Highlights 2022

Vanna Bartlett

breeds in water-filled cavities in trees. Males are known to guard a particular rot hole and it was a wonderful experience to watch one doing just that over a number of days at the end of June.

Sticking with Diptera, the Shadow Fly *Miltogramma punctata* was seen following female *Colletes similis* bees around in the war memorial garden. These flies, also called Satellite Flies, 'shadow' a female bee as she forages and then try to follow her back to her nest. When the bee leaves, the fly nips into the nest burrow and deposits a larva which predares any bee egg or larva present and then feeds on the stored pollen and nectar. This process (known as larviposition as opposed to oviposition) involves the eggs hatching within the fly prior to being laid. The disadvantage is less offspring are produced as larvae take up more room inside the female than eggs and also require greater nourishment to produce. The advantage is the larva 'hits the ground running' so to speak or rather shuffling (or whatever form of locomotion a maggot takes!) and can straight away predate its host and begin feeding immediately.



*Mallota cimbiciformis*  
guarding his rot-hole.

With the long hot summer extending into autumn, some species were recorded at quite late dates, most notably the robberfly *Machimus atricapillus* with a female seen on 18th October.

## True Bugs

With a distinct lack of perhaps more interesting insects to look for, I turned my attention to one of the more neglected groups – Aphids. A rather maligned group of true bugs, of the 600 or so species in the UK only a few are actually considered pests. Many are restricted to one particular plant so they can be relatively easy to track down. The diversity of tree species in the cemetery offered plenty of scope for discovery. A search of the smaller Silver Birch trees revealed a number of associated aphid species and I was pleased to find the lovely Lime Aphid (*Eucallipterus tiliiae*) on some of the plentiful Common Lime trees.

Beech, Sycamore and Elm added further species, the latter with the



Above: The attractive Lime Aphid - *Eucallipterus tiliiae*.

Below: Zigzag Elm Sawfly larva and the aphid *Tinocallis takachihoensis*.



Left: *Miltogramma punctata* shadowing a female *Colletes similis*.

# Wildlife Highlights 2022

Vanna Bartlett

relative newcomer to the British Isles *Tinocallis takachihoensis* photographed while looking for sawfly larvae. Conifer species included *Cinara confinis*, a large aphid associated with spruce, and *Eulachnus rileyi* on one of the various Pine trees.

While I was watching hoverflies around the Native Black Poplar tree, I spotted a number of swellings on the leaf stalks. These distinctive petiole galls are caused by the aphid *Pemphigus spyrothecae*.

Other bugs included a nymph of the Bronze Shieldbug (*Troilus luridus*), a predatory species that I have rarely encountered. They mainly prey on caterpillars so tend to be found in the tree canopy. An adult *Issus coleoptratus* was very nice to find on Ivy (I usually only find the much less impressive nymphs). Two species of *Eremocoris* ground bugs were found under fallen branches, *E. podagricus* and *E. fenestratus*.



Above right: *Cinara confinis* - one of the larger species of aphid.  
Right: *Pemphigus spyrothecae* petiole galls on native Black Poplar.



Above: *Issus coleoptratus* - a very distinctive bug that is most commonly found on Ivy.



Above: Bronze Shieldbug nymph.



# Wildlife Highlights 2022

Vanna Bartlett

## Bees

Spring got off to a good start with early records for the Hairy-footed Flower-bee (*Anthophora plumipes*) on 25th February with sightings of both male and female. *Andrena clarkella* was excitingly added to the solitary bee list in March. This is an early flying species normally found in areas with lots of sallow and indeed it was by one of the few sallows in the cemetery that the bees were seen.

Two new Furrow Bees were recorded, namely *Lasioglossum lativentre* and *L. malachurum*, and then a lovely female *Osmia caerulescens* was seen foraging on Bird's-foot Trefoil in July. This species is common in my garden so it is surprising that it hasn't been seen in the cemetery before.



*Epeolus sp. by the Colletes hederiae nest site.*

It was no surprise to see the first few *Colletes hederiae* males out on 22nd August but seeing a female on the 27th August was an early sighting as they usually emerge in September. The nest site in the west facing bank of the main driveway from Earlam Road proved quite the spectacle with hundreds of males flying low over the ground with an audible hum.



*Above: Male Andrena clarkella*

Mating balls were readily observed in early September. Two cleptoparasitic *Epeolus* sp. bees were present at the Ivy Bee nest site on 22nd August but weren't able to be identified to species. It isn't yet known if these bees use *Colletes hederiae* as a host in the UK.

## Wasps and Sawflies

The parasitoid wasp *Listrodromus nyctemerus* was seen around Ivy, doubtless hunting for the larvae of the Holly Blue butterfly on which to lay an egg. This wasp is seldom recorded (Stuart Paston recorded one in 2004) although its presence is responsible for the cyclical crash in numbers of its host, the Holly Blue butterfly. As numbers of the butterfly host build over a few years, so too does that of the little wasp until the number of parasitized caterpillars is so great that it causes a crash in the population of the butterfly. Then the pattern is repeated in a classic boom/bust scenario.



*Above: Female Osmia caerulescens nectaring on Bird's-foot Trefoil.*

Another interesting species I encountered for the first time was the Cynipid wasp *Callaspidia defonscolombei* which preys on hoverfly larva. Sawfly sightings were low this year but there was a good record of the larva of *Cladius grandis* feeding on Native Black Poplar – another 'by-catch' record from staking out this tree to watch the *Mallota cimbiciformis* hoverfly.



*Above: Listrodromus nyctemerus on Ivy.*



# Wildlife Highlights 2022

Vanna Bartlett



Above: *Cladius grandis* larva feeding on native Black Poplar.

## Other Wildlife

It's not all about invertebrates though. I was delighted to see both Wood Mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*) and Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) when I was out and about during the year.

If you want to learn more about Aphids see the Arthropedia Blog.

Below left: Hedgehog

Below middle: Wood Mouse



## Spiders

*Nigma walckenaeri* were hard to find in 2022 but I did manage a few sightings of this wonderful little green spider that I have reported on in a previous newsletter. They spin a small, distinctive sheet web across a leaf, almost always an evergreen one and I have only ever seen them on Ivy. Several times after finding one, I returned only to find that the Ivy had been removed in order to inspect the tree. This was unfortunate but it is sometimes necessary to remove Ivy in a public space where trees are suspected of being diseased and at risk of suddenly falling down or shedding limbs.

I did manage to add one new species of spider to the cemetery list, *Platnickina tincta*, while looking for ladybirds. I also found *Lathys humilis* which had previously been recorded by Pip Colyer in 2014.



*Misumena vatia* concealed in a Bramble flower, its presence betrayed by the stillness of its prey, a Ringlet butterfly.



Above: *Platnickina tincta* - a small but distinctive species.





## *Species Focus:* *Brimstone Butterfly* *Alysia Schuetzle*

*Look out for beautiful Brimstone butterflies in the cemetery this spring and summer.*

*Left: Brimstone butterfly (Gonepteryx rhamni)*

*Credit: Gary White.*

**S**pring has felt a little late this year; the cold and damp weather delaying the appearance of several species. But now - finally - some butterflies have begun to emerge, including a seasonal favourite: the Brimstone butterfly (*Gonepteryx rhamni*).

Brimstone butterflies can be spotted year-round, but are one of the first species to appear in early spring. Adults hibernate over winter, often among Ivy, Holly, and Bramble leaves, waiting for warm

spring days when they emerge to feed. Once in their adult form, Brimstones can live for around a year.

With a wingspan of between 6cm and 7.4cm, these sherbet-yellow butterflies are one of the largest of those recorded in Earlham Cemetery. Look out for their distinctively pointed, leaf-shaped wings and floaty, balloon-like flight.

The caterpillars of Brimstones feed on Common Buckthorn (*Rhamnus carthartica*) and Alder Buckthorn

(*Frangula alnus*), plants which thrive in wet woodland. Neither species has been recorded in Earlham Cemetery but, as Brimstones are a far-ranging and wandering species, they can be regularly seen flitting down the grassy paths and in the more wooded areas.

In contrast to the bright yellow males, female Brimstones are pale greenish-white, with both sexes sporting orange spots. It is thought that the bright yellow colour of the male brimstone's wings inspired the name "butterfly", from "butter-coloured fly".

*Brimstone butterfly (Gonepteryx rhamni)*

*Credit: Jorge Urosa*

