

planning project
EN010127 (Mallard Pass S.F.)
The Planning Inspectorate

Mrs P C Crampin



Supporting
BritishRedCross



30th September 2023

Dear Mr Cliff,

I enclose my nature
journal which I published just before
the news broke of the planned Mallard
Pass solar farm. I hope you will see what
a rich biodiverse landscape will be
lost if the project is passed. The first
pages are based on walks over the site
and the second list covers the adjacent
fields, woods and River Glen.
walks - page 4 Greatford
5 Bantwoop
12 Ryhall Heath

(SSSI) 41 Little Wymondley Road Reserve
adjacent land -
pages 6-15
26-27
39
58
76
87
90

Thank you for your care and attention to detail.
Yours,
[Redacted Signature]

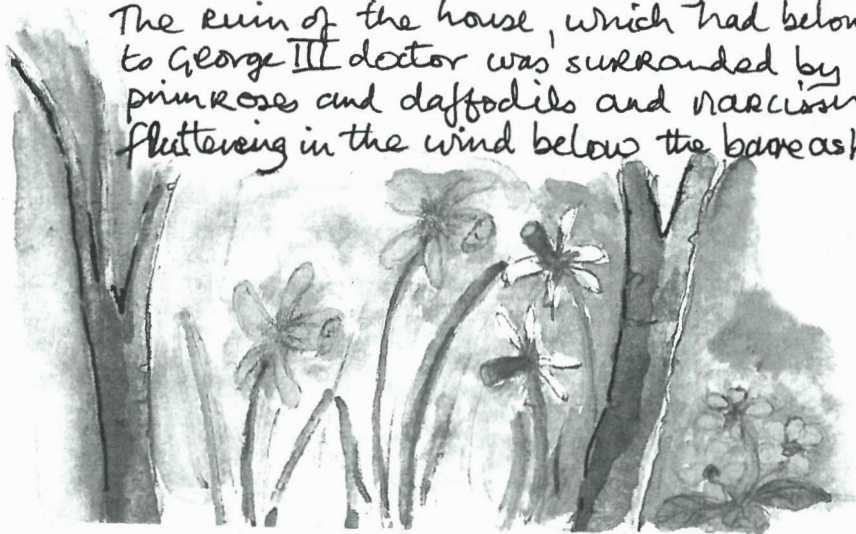
24th March

Daily walks with [redacted] begin for our regulation one hour exercise, outside. The sky was blue and the sun shone brightly. We were fortunate to enjoy many more weeks of warm sunny weather, which help keep spirits up.

So began my interest in observing nature in more detail than usual. Nature transformed itself more rapidly than usual because of the unseasonable amount of sun shine.

Our first walk was to Shillingthorpe, starting from the car, across the fields being planted with spring wheat. A herd of deer loitered in the same field as the busy tractor.

The ruin of the house, which had belonged to George III doctor was surrounded by primrose and daffodils and narcissus fluttering in the wind below the bare ash.



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25th March



The sun continued to shine and we see our first cowslip on a sheltered grassy field bank. We took the car then walked on to Banthorpe. The late blackthorn blossoms still a brilliant white in the bare hedges.

26th March For the last time we took the car to visit Rassels for plant food and primulas. The River Glen was running fast and high after all the recent rain.

27th March All the schools closed, because of the virus, with no indication when they would return. Consequently all public exams are suspended.

28th March The garden has dried up as have the fields, in some cases like concrete!

29th March British summer time begins, and so does spring, very warm and sunny.



primrose

cowslip

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29th March



Whilst walking along the local carby fields we note how busy the farmers are. What appeared to be cultivated fields are being ploughed and planted up with wheat. A few weeks ago the same fields were sodden and flooded by the riverside in Ryhall. For many weeks it had rained ruining many crops leaving the land unworkable.

APRIL

1st April This was to be the opening of [redacted] first 2 man sculpture exhibition. It was to be in Corby Glen Memorial Gallery but was cancelled because of the imposed social distancing policy. Instead of working on his displays we worked on the garden instead.

5th April It is Palm Sunday. I attended my first 'Zoom' church service, which was comforting. First Brunstone Butterfly.



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6th April We received our first online grocery delivery from Morrisons, which was set up by [redacted] before she [redacted]. We have been very worried at [redacted] lack of progress and she is in very low spirits in isolation. This isolation continued for 28 days, the latter part being in overflow at the Hilton Hotel.

7th April We took advantage of the hot sunny weather by doing lots of gardening. We rearranged borders and made seed beds for vegetables by the compost. First orange tip butterfly.

10th April [redacted] walked to the cross roads and saw the first bluebells in nearby Spunney.

12th April EASTER after a video church service we walked to [redacted] wood or Monks wood and were delighted to see more lush primroses and violets. To our surprise the far side was a carpet of bluebells bobbing in the dapple sun.



Monks wood bluebells

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12th April On our return we celebrated Easter with [redacted] and [redacted], drinking champagne and conversing over the fence at a safe distance.

[redacted] remains [redacted] and the 4 children only had little easter eggs, the last in the Abu Dhabi Shops. [redacted] family did better.

[redacted] saw our first swallow and 1 a house martin fly over the garden.

13th April During our walk we noticed three gates removed on the Essendine Loop and decided it was for health and safety in this virus lock down. Discovered white butterflies were the female orange tips! I have never noticed how common and yet so beautiful is the wild cherry in blossom.



swallows

house martin return 8

15th April

The cowslips on the grass verges have now grown to their full height as they ^{and} grasses compete for light. The hawthorn hedges are no longer bare with green leaf shoots everywhere.

The pair of black birds in the garden are very busy feeding on all our lawns.

The fish are more numerous in the west Glen and the surface feeders, possibly trout are getting bigger. At the beginning of the journal we saw no fish in the river, but as the water has warmed more food must become available. It seems very early for the oil seed rape fields to start flowering. I am glad that there are far fewer fields of bright yellow these days as it can bring on the

[redacted] The crab apple blossom is beautiful now.



crab apple



blackbirds

16th April

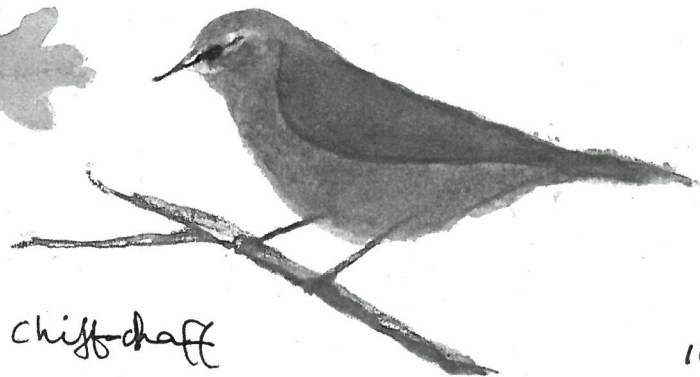
We walked to Braceborough woods to see the lush primroses and discovered a carpet of bluebells in the left side of the wood. The sun shone and the peacock butterflies danced, it was heaven!

It was the first time we noticed the oak leaves were unfurling well before the ash trees. We heard the first chiffchaff singing in the woods.

I started my first zoom meeting of boys book group reading 'Secret Seven' my favourite!



peacock butterfly 30th Apr



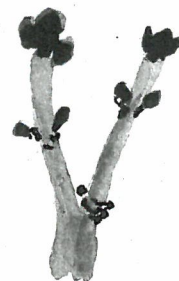
chiffchaff

17th April

It rained in the night and continued the next day, thank goodness. We have gone from one of the wettest March's to the driest Aprils. Both garden and field crops needed this water and the West Glen stream rose in volume and spread under the bridge.

The hawthorn hedges are now budding and the crab apple blossom is peeping through.

The bare ash are now showing green spikes of leaves yet unfurled next to the dark purplish tiny male flowers



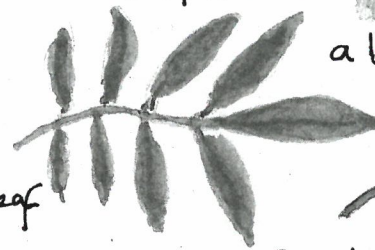
ash buds



ash flowers



a leaf unfurling



ash leaf



female ash keys

21st April

We parked the car on Pickworth Drift and walked to Ryhall Heath and Ryhall, "John Clare's" country. The sun again shone brightly bringing out all the early butterflies that we had seen on previous walks, including the female orange tip.

All the flowers seemed to come out at once, the white nettle being the first and then the red campion

the tall cow parsley and the creeping purple bugle. It has been flowering for weeks at a low level.



cow parsley



Red campion



Bugle

24th April

We walked along the West Glen which is at average flow after a very wet spring where it rose by around 4 feet flooding in places. During the dry April the water dropped becoming clear so we could easily see the sticklebacks and baby trout feeding on the surface. As the weeks go by the fish grow bigger and more numerous. As do the Rooks resting in the spinney at Essendine, they are very noisy gregarious birds. Fortunately they are nesting high in the rather bare ash trees well away from the village. The hedges and trees are all greening up very rapidly in this warm sunny weather.



Essendine spinney rookery

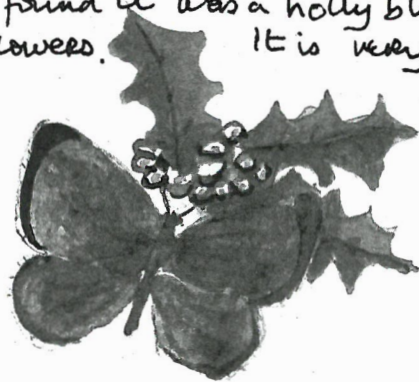
25th April

On our way back from buying some farm eggs we parked near Belmehorpe Grange to take a walk. We took the wrong path from the beginning and headed towards Uffington instead of Bantworpe. It was another very hot sunny day and we saw a pair of Longtailed tits feeding in the thick verdant hawthorn hedge.



Long-tail tits

26th April on the Essendine Loop walk we spotted our first blue butterfly. At first I thought was a chalk blue but on referring to the book I found it was a holly blue feeding off tiny holly flowers. It is very small and delicate.



Female Holly Blue 16 mm

27th April

It was a cloudy morning and then 3 days of rain followed. Consequently the fields and hedges turned from cinnamon colour to a huge range of greens. The west Glen flowered at high volume again and too murky to see the fish.



The grasses are starting to flower but I cannot identify them yet.



Bladder campion



Herb Robert



horse chestnut 15

22nd May

It has been unpleasant walking weather with exceptionally high winds of 45 miles per hour. As a result the May blossom ^{has} been scattered across the tracks like confetti. Most of the chestnut candles have also shed their petals leaving most of the trees and hedges pure green. Although the elder and guelder Rose are in full flower their creamy white flowers are subdued compared to the blousy white May flower. The farmer has cut his first hay field for his horses, it smells so sweet.

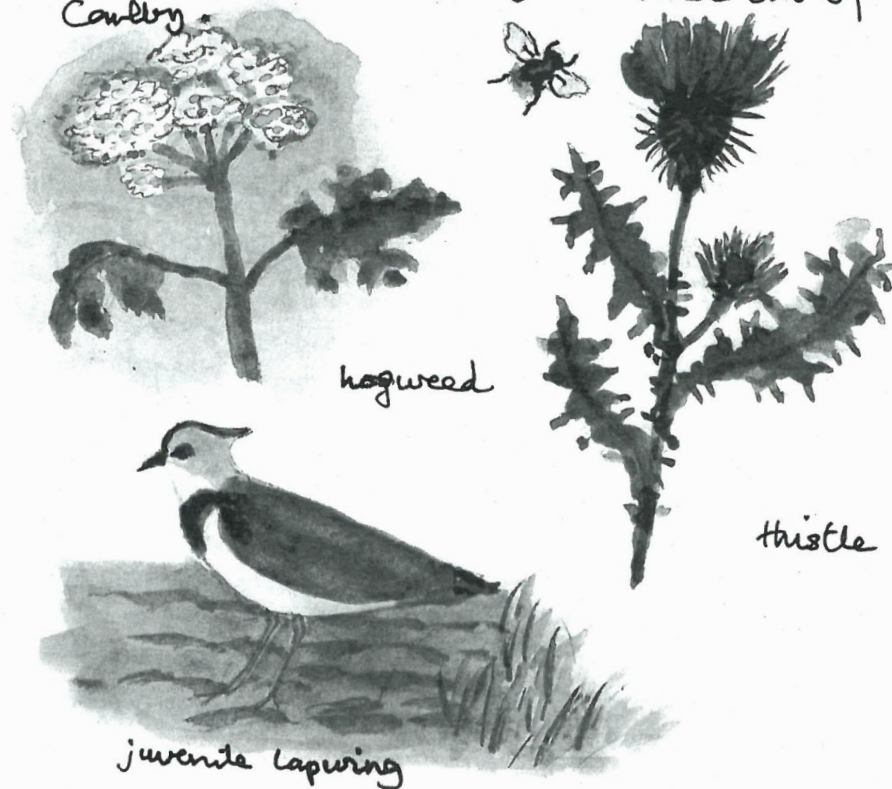
24th May I biked to Braceborough, now the wind has dropped to a pleasant breeze. I thought all the sazzzy lime green of the spring trees and hedges had dulled down to a corporation green with small breaks of white dog rose and cow parsley. Three brash poppies have sprung up to brighten up the roadside.



common poppies

A magnificent huge purple thistle caught my eye and the bee on it was golden with pollen. A larger golden sight was a meadow of shining buttercups, what a rich treat. I would have missed the immature Lapwing if it had not called 'pee wit' for its parents.

26th May I really missed the cloud of delicately swaying cow parsley; it had been mown by the council to tidy the verge. In its place was the rather robust hogweed coming into flower at the side of our road out of Canby.



hogweed

thistle

juvenile lapwing

24th June

Several very hot days were followed by wet, thundery weather bringing much needed rain to the garden and golf course. The hedge rows are cream with dusty elderflower and white with an abundance of bramble blossom a good year for blackberries, I think. A large hare streaked across the golf course, we have seen many this spring but hardly any rabbits. Where are they?



field scabious



agrimony

27th June

The hot weather is over and we are experiencing very strong gusty winds and many sharp heavy and light showers. We walked along the West Glen stream which is now shallow, slow flowing and quite overgrown. Now very few fish are seen from the bridge. The white flowers remaining, like the hedge parsley are tall and delicate and are being replaced by purple, pink, and yellow. The tall teasels are turning from a fresh green to purple where the flowers are opening and the pink willow herb is just opening. The humble common lamb's-tongue plantain looks quite beautiful in flower.



common teasels



lamb's tongue plantain



rose-bay willow herb

30th June

As we drove to Pickworth some of the grass verges were peppered with bright splashes of yellow and purple flowers. Some of the meadows in Pickworth were also rich in many new wild flowers such as the yellow ladies bedstraw and the white sweet woodruff and some others still to be identified. As the sun came out so did the butterflies mostly tortoiseshell and one smooth velvety ringlet the spotted female and the plain male.



Ringlet butterfly ♀



chicory



lady's bedstraw



sweet woodruff

40

3rd July

Just a mile or so from home on a road we often travel is 'Little Warren Roadside Nature Reserve'. I never realised how rich in wild flowers it is and I now see it has SSSI status, deservedly so. Quite a few flowers on the list we saw in Roberts Field but I was surprised to see on the roadside. They were Knapweed, greater Knapweed, scabious, Rock rose, birds foot trefoil, lady's bedstraw, plantain, broomrape, pyramid orchid, sweet woodruff, hay rattle, convolvulus, ragwort, larger wild thyme, agrimony, Rest harrow, lesser yellow trefoil, hogweed. Pubs and Restaurants are allowed to open!



great knapweed



Rest harrow



Hay Rattle



larger wild thyme⁴¹

2nd August

As we walked the Essendine Loop we noticed the hedges were laden with ripening sloes, reddening Hawthorn berries, glossy purple elderberries and red Golden Rose berries. Also the Rowan berries turning bright orange so early, will there be any left to decorate the church for harvest in October?



elderberry



sloe



Wild Guelder Rose



Rowan

11th August

It is 33°C and they are combining the barley field next to our barn, but it is not as dusty as I expected. Taking advantage of the heat wave they baled up the straw and gathered it in the next day.

12th August

The searing heat continues to dry up the grass verges to a golden brown producing seed heads. Reminding us of autumn.



cow parsley hogweed thistle

dock

13th August After a week of hot sunny weather a week of rough stormy windy weather follows. Grass returns to the grass verges and the combining is interrupted causing more problems for the farmers.

14th August Due to more heavy rain our garden lunch booked at the Queen's Head had to be moved inside. However the river Nene looked very green in the rain reminding me of Millais' painting of 'Ophelia'.

20th August During coffee in the garden with [redacted] and [redacted] a raucous parliament of Rooks flew over interrupting our chatter.

28th September

Just up the road near Witham on the Hill we discovered a small Reserve run by Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, called Pitsford. It is a pretty location on a former gravel workings and the highlight of my visit was spotting a bright little copper butterfly amongst the flowers.

I saw common centaury, autumn hawkbit, yellow wort and blue fleabane.

The correct name is Stanton's Pit.



small copper 14mm

30th September The quinces that remain on our tree after the heavy storms have turned into beautiful golden fruit. I picked a few to make quince jelly and quince gin. The weather is so wet and windy I want to be indoors.

2nd November A very wet windy game of golf was brightened up by the beautiful pink purple and oranges on the turning sycamores and a colourful bank of planted wild flowers, at least eight sorts, some marigolds, cornflower, and yellow poppies.



quince

3rd October was recorded as the wettest day since records began. [redacted] people have died from Covid and new cases are rising everyday to around 70, in the UK.

It is estimated that [redacted] have now died from Covid in the world.

7th October we met up with my brother for the first time since the pandemic struck. There were no kisses or hugs as we socially distanced but the sun shone again allowing us to enjoy a pleasant picnic at Waddesdon Manor Park. We did not go into the beautiful French styled chateau but we enjoyed the aviary and gardens. Most of the trees were predominantly green and the cedars were majestic. However the sycamores were red orange and yellow and the oaks were a very bright red with the field maple being a pretty yellow. We heard a strange cawing sound in the trees and finally decided it was a Raven as it flew out into the open ground, very unusual for south of England. We were lucky with the weather as it rained all the rest of the week.

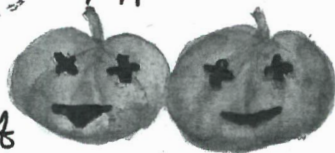


Raven

12th October The numbers of virus cases are increasing rapidly so the government are bringing in more restrictions and different levels in the cities badly effected.

31st October

Another very windy day so we took a short walk out of the village taking some shelter from the hedges. On the grass verges the flowers were still thinking it was spring with chamomile, yarrow, scabious, knapweed hogweed and poppies all flowering. This year we had no children calling on us for Halloween treats, I expect fear of passing on the virus kept people at home.



1st November I saw a Red Admiral in Michael's garden. The sun eventually came out between showers and by the afternoon we had gale force winds. We visited [redacted] brother in the morning socially distancing in their garden, and then on to visit Houghton Hall. Anish Kapoor was exhibiting large stone sculptures and a series of, concave discs which created interesting optical illusions inside the house and in the gardens. It was such a beautiful setting enhanced by sunshine and swirling golden leaves of autumn.

Sky Mirror 2018
Anish Kapoor



2nd November

It is another warm sunny day and I played golf in a team which won, the first this year! After lunch at the 6 Bells we drove to the small reserve of Stanton's Pit, run by Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust. I wanted to identify flowers I had seen on, 28th September, that had puzzled me. Most of these plants are now growing much shorter because of autumn conditions being much colder than spring, their usual flowering time. Now I identified common centaury, autumn hawkbit, yellow wort, daisy, blue fleabane and goose. The willows surrounding the lake were a cool grey green and this was contrasted by the still bright red rosehips.



flock of fieldfares

6th November

We took a walk along [redacted] track and as we neared the wood I smell the characteristic smell of autumn, damp leaf mould and fungus reminding me of my childhood walks in the New Forest. Many of the haws had been eaten but there were lots of rosehips, now quite blue sloes with acorns and crabapples on the ground. Nature has produced a beautiful store this year and we saw a few fieldfares feeding.

7th November

It is warm and sunny and I picked some sloes on our walk to Braceborough woods. Many of the trees are bare but the oaks are still quite green. Along one field margin we saw an extraordinary collection of wild or escaped flowers, some that I had not seen before, and had not been there on previous walks. These colourful plants were cultivated flax, butterbur and white and blue mustard.



flax



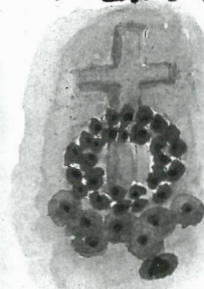
butterbur



white mustard

8th November

It is ~~remembrance~~ Sunday and the churches have been closed so we cannot hold our service! a member from the armed forces laid a poppy wreath on the new cross on Carby green.



Later children came to lay their pebbles painted with poppies. Thankfully the ceremony at the cenotaph attended by the royal family proceeded under social distancing rules.



[redacted] led a beautiful zoom service with recorded music which was very uplifting.



Sadly men fell in the war as leaves fall in autumn