

Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society, Natural History Section

Minutes of meeting held in the New Walk Museum on Wednesday, 9th January, 2019 from 7.00. until 9.30pm. 25 members and 2 guests attended.

The meeting was chaired by John Tinning.

- After a welcome, John thanked Jan for arranging that refreshments were available as self-service.
- He trailed the next Loughborough Natural History Society meeting and Jan trailed our next meeting – Little Owls by Richard Pegler.
- He reminded the meeting of the imminent Newsletter deadline
- Sightings were –
 - Lesser Celandines, *Ficaria verna*, already in flower – Steve Woodward
 - Light Brown Apple Moth, *Epiphyas Postvittana*, in Evington – Adrian Russell
 - Red Kites, *Milvus milvus*, in Stoughton, 6.1.19 – Alison Gregory
 - Mottled Umber, *Erannis defoliaria*, in Loughborough – Hazel Graves
 - Redwing, *Turdus iliacus*, flock in Knighton garden, late December
- Exhibitions of books and Butterflies relevant to the evening's talk

John then introduced **Adrian Russell** who gave a talk entitled **The Camberwell Beauty in 19th Century Leicestershire. And just who was the Rev. Armitage's sister?**

“Our speaker this evening is an old friend and member of the Section, Adrian Russell. After completing an Environmental Health degree, Adrian joined Leicester City Council in 1975, as an Environmental Health Officer specialising in Air and Noise Pollution issues. Over a long and successful career with the authority, he rose to eventually become Director of Environmental and Neighbourhood Services, in charge of everything from cemeteries to street furniture. During his period of office, he was able to arrange very privileged access to parks and cemeteries for nocturnal moth trapping! He has been heard to declare that it was the moths that kept him sane. He retired four years ago and his main passion has become almost a full time occupation in its own right. It would be fair to say that he has single-handedly revolutionised the recording, record-keeping and general interest in lepidoptera throughout VC55. A very large network of garden recorders, supplemented by teams of more mobile recorders who target specific locations and species, now create a vast body of lepidoptera records each year. Adrian is now making use of these records and the large number of historic records that he has researched at Barrow and elsewhere to write what we all hope will be the definitive volume on The Lepidoptera of Leicestershire and Rutland to be published in 2020.”

After mentioning that he had received 73k records for 2017, Adrian talked of the historical setting for early records of the Camberwell Beauty, *Nymphalis antiopa*, and how short entries in a Victorian record book had guided him back to original sources. Fascination with these had led him to search many original census documents in search of the finder of one of the specimens on display which was labelled ‘collected by the Rev. Armitage's daughter’. He became obsessed with the search, but reached no definite conclusion as to which of the 5 daughters was the actual collector. He had also researched other 19th century records, resulting in several more precise dates, locations and recorders. Finally these records were compared with those from the 2 later centuries.

After questions, John gave a vote of thanks.