



This press release is for those so-called experts who say they cannot find any Net gain Biodiversity on plot (F) Phase 2 Grazing Fields, a major component of Owlthorpe Heritage & Nature Trail.

The last Survey was taken in Spring 2012 by Derek Whiteley. Records were added to Sheffield Biological Records Centre RECORDER database. Here is his report:

Huge numbers of Ladybirds basking in the late March sunshine on trunks of small trees. I counted 1139 Seven-spot Ladybirds basking on 20 trees (average 57 ladybirds per tree). Also 26 Harlequin Ladybirds and 31 Two-spot Ladybirds. Assumption is that Phase 2 meadow is an important hibernation site for ladybirds and an important spring emergence/basking site. The requirement appears to be the presence of small trees in a warm, sunny position.

In May a single 16-spot Ladybird was swept from marginal damp grassland. This appears to be new to Sheffield and is Local UK. It has a requirement for tall grassy habitats. The 14-spot Ladybird, Cream-spot Ladybird and Pine Ladybird (found on mature Ash – not unusual) were also found in this meadow bringing the total to 7 species of Ladybird.

Good to see that the colony of Slender Groundhoppers has survived path construction and is still present in the damper areas of Phase 2 alongside the fence on the NE side.

Excellent numbers of Orange Tip butterfly – over 20 counted on 22 May. Also, good to see Brimstone and Comma butterflies here. The new European Tree Bumblebee has now colonised this field and may be nesting. Plenty of Hive Bees present in March. Sallow blossom is an important food source at this time of year and the Salix trees should be retained.

Good numbers of Hairy Shield Bug, click beetles, Carder bees, and a single Metallic Blue Shieldbug *Zicrona caerulea* (Local UK) a predator found in good grasslands. (new to Owlthorpe) Also good numbers of the spring hoverfly *Epistrophe eligans* –new to Owlthorpe.

The wooded area along the wall yielded a good range of common woodlice, millipedes and centipedes under stones and logs – adding several new species to the Owlthorpe list. There is a need to retain stones, logs and other debris.

In May this field was well grazed and most of the interest was around the margins where vegetation was tall by the fences. There was little of interest in the grazed areas. The vegetation was too short to support much life. Trees are taking over in this meadow, but have a role to play, so ideally, we are looking for a sensible balance between trees and open grassland. Conservation of damp grassland is important. Bare areas are also important – here we have nesting solitary bees and ground beetles such as *Amara* species

Species Biodiversity

70 species were recorded in this spring survey of which 23 were new to Owlthorpe Meadows (some specimens still to be sent to specialists – results not available until 2013) 175 species have been identified from the 2011 survey of which 121 were new for Owlthorpe Meadows. 140 species were recorded in 2010 (mid-July to September)

299 species is the combined total for 2010-2012 years. This list includes some species that are nationally localised and some species that are scarce in Sheffield. Derek Whiteley June 2012.

Derek has provided me with all his information so it can be easily downloaded by the public from our Website at Ecological-Owlthorpe.org [Ecological Surveys](#) . I wanted to find out more about Derek's colleagues who helped in the construction of Owlthorpe Heritage & Nature Trail. Derek explained he knew the photographs Peter Wolstenholme & Roger Marsh. Thank you, Peter and Roger, for the fantastic photos that appear on all the interpretation boards dotted around the site. The photographs are a tremendous help in explaining to both children and visitors what our oasis has to offer. Derek also explained all his colleagues had either retired or been made redundant.

In Dr Nicole Dempsey's paper entitled Place-Keeping, Sustainability she explains, financial pressures on urban parks are adversely affecting the management and quality of parks. According to UNISON (2018), 59% of the UK's local authorities had cut their parks and green spaces budgets between 2016/2017 and 2018/2019. This has led some local authorities to change how their parks services are delivered with fewer staff and an increased focus on lower maintenance.

However, this should not have been the case in Owlthorpe as under the freedom of information Act, I have received a copy of the payment structure which shows Sheffield City Council were receiving government funds. More Surveys should have taken place but did not. Also, Owlthorpe Heritage & Nature Trail was left to rewilding. To my knowledge little or no maintenance of the Hedgerows, grasslands and Wetlands has taken place

<https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/HigherLevelStewardshipAgreementMap.pdf>

. The Higher-Level Stewardship Agreement map provided by Natural England, shows exactly where the Maintenance of Hedgerows, ditches, grasslands and Wetlands should have taken place.

I hope this answers the questions for the so-called experts who cannot seem to see the wood for the trees.

For more information, please visit our website: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/index.html>

Thank you for your support

Michael Meredith