



Registered Scottish Charity No. SC033394

# NEWSLETTER

**AUTUMN 2024**  
**VOLUME 20 ISSUE 2**

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## WELCOME

**Welcome to the autumn newsletter.**

It has been a period of change, with Nick and then Bruce leaving and a new team of volunteers being trained up to take over their work. We were delighted to welcome two new committee members - Thornton and Barbara. They have already proved to be excellent additions to our committee.

## DATES FOR THE DIARY

The Friends of Cammo Ordinary General Meeting, will be held at the Lodge on Wednesday 4th December at 7.30 p.m. We will be serving mince pies and mulled wine and we would be delighted if you can join us.

The Annual General Meeting will be on Wednesday 5th March 2025. The proposed OGMs in 2025 are:

Thursday 5th June

Wednesday 3rd September

Wednesday 3rd December

All dates are to be confirmed at the forthcoming OGM.



## FAREWELL TO NICK AND BRUCE

**July saw us wave a fond farewell to Nick and Annie Bengie, not forgetting Bramble the dog, as they set off to start their wilding adventure in sunny Devon.**

As many of you will be aware Nick worked tirelessly in Cammo over many years to make it the beautiful haven for flora and fauna we see today. During Nick's tenure he oversaw the planting of hundreds of native trees, shrubs and wildflowers and supervised the creation of our amazing wetland. His drive and vision for Cammo has set strong foundations for the future of Cammo Estate Local Nature Reserve and we thank him.

Our grateful thanks also go to Annie, who produced the twice yearly newsletters, which kept us all up to date with events and developments in Cammo.

As a token of gratitude from the Committee and the Friends of Cammo, we presented Nick with a watercolour, of one of our nesting kestrels.

We were also sorry to see Bruce leave the Committee. Bruce took over the role of Chairperson in March. He was an enthusiastic committee member and could be seen in all weathers shifting barrows of woodchip and logs around the park. Bruce, Claire and Asia are also embarking on their own adventure and we wish them well as they make their exciting plans for the future.



*Detail of kestrel watercolour*

# WILDLIFE AROUND CAMMO

## OUR BEES IN THE WALLED GARDEN

Our bees in Cammo continue to go from strength to strength this season, with the care and attention of our new apiarist John and his very able assistant Rhona. John has kindly submitted the following report:-

### CAMMO ESTATE APIARY OCTOBER 2024 UPDATE

I took over the running of the Cammo Estate apiary in early May this year. With the help of Rachel and Rhona, we have managed to stabilise and grow the existing two hives over the summer and are looking to have around 25kg of honey this year. The bees have certainly enjoyed the newly planted bee friendly plants in the walled garden.

Other beekeepers have struggled with the poor summer and have actually had to feed their bees. Thanks to swarming activity in the north Edinburgh area we have introduced a captured swarm (see below) to the apiary which has settled down well. We are now busy getting the hives ready for winter with syrup feed and insulation.

*By John Jeffrey  
(Cammo Estate Beekeeper)*



Swarm of bees

## BEEWALK SURVEY

*By Huw Pennell*

The revived BeeWalk survey at Cammo has now been completed for the year. According to the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, this has been a tough year for bumblebees due to the very wet early Summer. This affected bumblebee nest numbers especially those of the Red tailed bumblebee, which is a later nesting bumblebee than many others.

At Cammo all of the 'Big 7' bumblebees were recorded. The most recorded was the 'all ginger' Common Carder Bee - a long tongue specialist. This was also the latest recorded bumblebee and can still be seen around the walled garden feeding at the Catmint and Wood Cranesbill beds. The 2nd most recorded was the Buff-tailed Bumblebee, this is more of a generalist and the Queens are one of the largest bumblebees you will see in the Spring and Autumn with their classic, black, white and yellow striped appearance. The other species recorded were the Tree Bumblebee, the Garden Bumblebee (which has the longest tongue of our native bumblebees) which forages on long-tubed flowers such as

the Foxgloves and Comfrey on the estate, the White-tailed Bumblebee, the Early Bumblebee and the Red Tailed Bumblebee. In line with the news from the Bumblebee Conservation Trust - the Red Tailed Bumblebee was the lowest recorded sightings of the 'Big 7'. There was one other Bumblebee of note recorded and that was a sighting of a Southern Cuckoo Bumblebee. Queen Cuckoo bumblebees produce no workers of its own and the Southern Cuckoo takes over the nest of its host the Buff-tailed Bumblebee.

The recording season starts again next Spring and with the continuing development of pollinator friendly flora on the Estate hopefully we will see a growing number of bumblebee sightings and species next year and a recovery of the Red-tailed bumblebee - my personal favourite.

### HONEY BEE FACT

one female honey bee can produce 1/4g of honey in its lifetime. Therefore for a 450g jar of honey required 1800 honey bees!



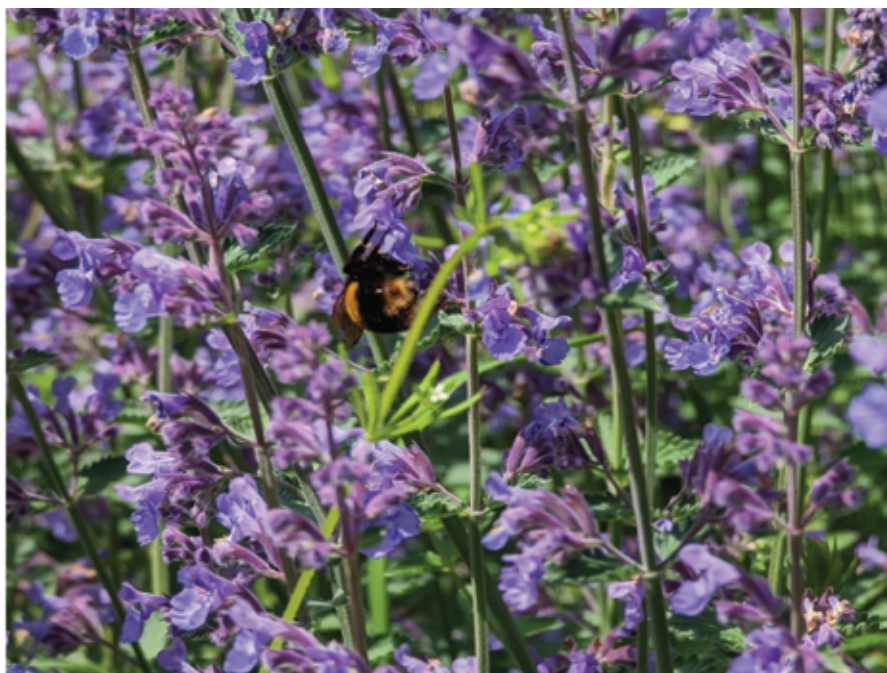
# WILDLIFE AROUND CAMMO CONT'D

## BEE GARDEN & ORCHARD

Two things that have certainly enjoyed our rather 'damp' summer this year, are our Bee Garden and Orchard. The Bee Garden started flowering in early May and is still looking great. The catmint especially has been a favourite for the bees and butterflies alike.



*A Garden Bumblebee with its tongue sticking out*



*A Common Carder Bee*

The bee garden is tended by the gardening group. If you would like to join us, please contact [lynnwhitehead@mac.com](mailto:lynnwhitehead@mac.com)

In South Field, the gardening group are presently clearing away the long grass and weeds, which have grown inside and around the tubes, where the saplings are growing. This will help to promote the saplings' growth.

We had a bumper crop of cooking and eating apples this year but sadly the plums and pears again didn't do well.



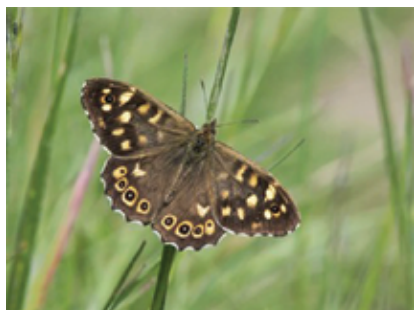
*Nothing goes to waste in the Orchard!!!*

# WILDLIFE AROUND CAMMO CONT'D

## BUTTERFLY UPDATE

*By Michael Roe*

It was a relatively poor year for butterflies in Cammo with low numbers of Whites, Browns (Ringlet and Meadow Brown) and only occasional sightings of the colourful Vanessa's (Peacock, Red Admiral and Comma), Common Blue, Holly Blue and Small Skipper. Speckled Wood was the exception with numbers increasing in recent years. There was an exciting discovery of Purple Hairstreak eggs early in the year but no adults were recorded. They are difficult to spot as they fly high in the tree canopy (they are oak specialists) and later in the day.



*Speckled Wood*

The overall poor results were consistent with the rest of the country and Butterfly Conservation has declared a 'Butterfly Emergency'. We hope for a better showing next year.



*Holly Blue*

## CAMMO WETLAND



*One of our visitors to the wetland*

We were delighted to see that the ducks and moorhens, which had taken up residence in the pond, did indeed produce offspring. The kingfisher and the heron continue to be regular visitors and parents and children alike will have been pleased to see so many tadpoles thriving in the wetland. Our volunteers, who have been working clearing the vegetation around the new trees have encountered a healthy frog population – believe me they are good jumpers (the frogs not the volunteers)!!!

The wildflowers really came into their own this year and produced a colourful display on the approach to the wetland.

Over the next few weeks, we will be thinning out the flag irises and the pond weed, which has spread rapidly over the spring and summer months.

The grille fitted to the outlet drain of the wetland, to prevent blockages, is working well.



# THE WALLED GARDEN

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## CONSOLIDATION WORKS TO EXTERIOR GARDEN WALLS

In August stonemasons arrived at south car park to start consolidation work for the Council on the walled garden, stables and other ruins, including rebuilding the walled garden's south wall. We are fortunate to have such skilled craftspeople working on this project and as you can see from the before and after photos below, the workmanship is remarkable.



Before

Related to this, there has been tree work around the walled garden, taking down some diseased trees (mostly ash) and others identified by the Council's Trees and Woodlands Officers. At present the building work is having quite an impact, but the scars will soon disappear as the vegetation regrows. As a result of the work the ruins will be safer and more accessible for visitors and we will work hard to return the Walled Garden back into the magical place it has always been.

The consolidation works are due to continue until December 2024. The work may run on after this date if bad weather delays progress. The south car park will remain closed until this work is completed.



After

## LEWIS LEAP DOG SHOW

Once again this fund raising event proved to be a huge success. It was a credit to all the hard work and organisation by Elizabeth and Ian and their wonderful support team. The sun shone and dogs of all ages, shapes and sizes had a great time, as did their owners.

## PAINTING OF LODGE & REMOVAL OF OLD FENCE

Many thanks to Roger for the great job he did painting the exterior of Cammo Lodge. I think you will agree it is looking amazing. The inside of the Lodge and the office will be painted in the next week or two, when the kindergarten children will be on holiday. The wooden fence surrounding Leaf and Bean has been removed as it was rotting.

## CHRISTMAS TREES

The council have decided that no Christmas trees are to be dropped off in Cammo Estate this year.

## LEAF AND BEAN

The Leaf and Bean van will be moving to the other side of the Lodge (just as you come in the main gate). Leaf and Bean have been a popular addition to Cammo, not only with folk walking in Cammo, but also their dogs, who have learnt very quickly that it is a great place to stop off for a doggy treat!

# VOLUNTEER GROUPS & PROJECTS

For two days in June this year, Cammo welcomed youth volunteers from Erskine Stewarts Melville Schools. The days turned out to be not only informative but great fun and an excellent team building exercise, both for the Cammo committee and the youth volunteers.

The students were split into two groups on each day. The main tasks were to dig over an area of the Walled Garden in preparation for the planting of soft fruit. They also had to barrow wood chip and spread it along the paths. In the afternoon there was a tour of Cammo and a bug/wildlife identification competition. Rhona, our assistant bee keeper, explained to the students about our bees and how efficiently a colony of bees work together. The wildlife highlights included a deer in South Field, numerous frogs, toads and a heron in flight over the wetland. Eighty seven species of wild flora and fauna were identified over the two days. Our thanks to Michael, Simon, Barbara and Rhona for making this a memorable and enjoyable day for the students.

In the last couple of months we have had work parties from NatWest and Lloyds. Everyone, in these groups worked hard and seemed to really enjoy a day away from their desks.



Tree Planting Project

# THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our wonderful team of Cammo volunteers, who are out there in all weathers and also the volunteers who staff Cammo Lodge on Sunday afternoons. We also thank our Council Natural Heritage Officers Caroline and David for all the great work they do and the support they give Friends of Cammo.

We do hope you have enjoyed this issue of our newsletter. If you would like any further information on volunteer activities etc. in Cammo, please contact us on [friendsofcammo@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:friendsofcammo@yahoo.co.uk) or visit our website: [www.friendsofcammo.org](http://www.friendsofcammo.org)

Thanks to one of our members, Arlene, we have two great apple recipes for you to try out:-

## Apple Crumble

### INGREDIENTS

800g apples, peeled and cut into small pieces

175g demerara sugar

half a teaspoon of cinnamon

juice of half a lemon

50g chopped hazelnuts (or whizz whole hazelnuts in a food processor)

175g plain flour

pinch of salt

120g cold butter, melted

3 whole star anise (optional)

### METHOD

Preheat the oven to 190 degrees.

Spread the apples evenly in an ovenproof dish and sprinkle with 3 tablespoons of the sugar, half the cinnamon and the lemon juice. Scatter with the star anise (if using).

Mix the remaining sugar and cinnamon together with the flour and salt.

Stir in the melted butter gradually until the mixture becomes like big cloddy breadcrumbs.

Spread over the apples and bake in the oven for a maximum of 45 minutes (check after 30 minutes) until the top is golden brown and juice is bubbling up. Allow to cool for a few minutes.

Serve with cream, custard, ice cream or yogurt.

## Apple Chutney

### INGREDIENTS

1.5 kilos apples, peeled and cut into small pieces

Half a litre of vinegar

500g onions, chopped in a chopper

500g sugar (granulated or caster)

One and a half teaspoons salt

One teaspoon of each of the following:

allspice

ground cloves

cinnamon

mustard seeds

Zest and juice of one lemon

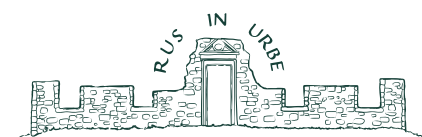
(Dried fruits can be added if liked)

### METHOD

Put all the ingredients in a large pot and bring to a boil.

Turn the heat down and simmer for approximately 2 hours with the lid off.

[Sterilise jars by putting in oven, turn heat to 140 degrees, remove after 10 minutes].



*Friends of Cammo*

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