



Photograph of Joseph Whitaker from *Jottings of a Naturalist* by Joseph Whitaker (Walter Black & Co Ltd, 1912). *East Midlands Special Collection* Not 1.C54 WHI

# NATURE CONSERVATION



*Scolytus Destructor* (Dutch Elm Disease beetle) from *British Beetles: Transferred From Curtis's British Entomology With Descriptions* by EW Janson (Bell and Daldy, 1863). *Special Collection QL575.J2*



SYLVA:  
'TO  
SLOWLY  
TRACE THE  
FOREST'S  
SHADY SCENE'

The old oaks of Sherwood Forest are now recognised to be of great nature conservation value for insects, fungi and birds. Many of the most zealous natural historians and collectors were clergymen such as the Rev Alfred Thornley 'who has devoted many years to the investigation of the Coleoptera [beetles] of the county.'

Some locals became professional insect collectors. John Trueman, of Edwinstowe, was described as 'first-rate' entomologist who sold moths and other insects to national collections. On 'dark nights he goes out into the Forest with a pot of rum and honey which he smears over the bark of the trees, to lure the insects.' He 'pulls a dark lantern from his pocket, and throws the light full upon the tree, where he beholds his victims enjoying their death-supper... then quietly brushes them into a tin box... and kills them with spirits of camphor.'

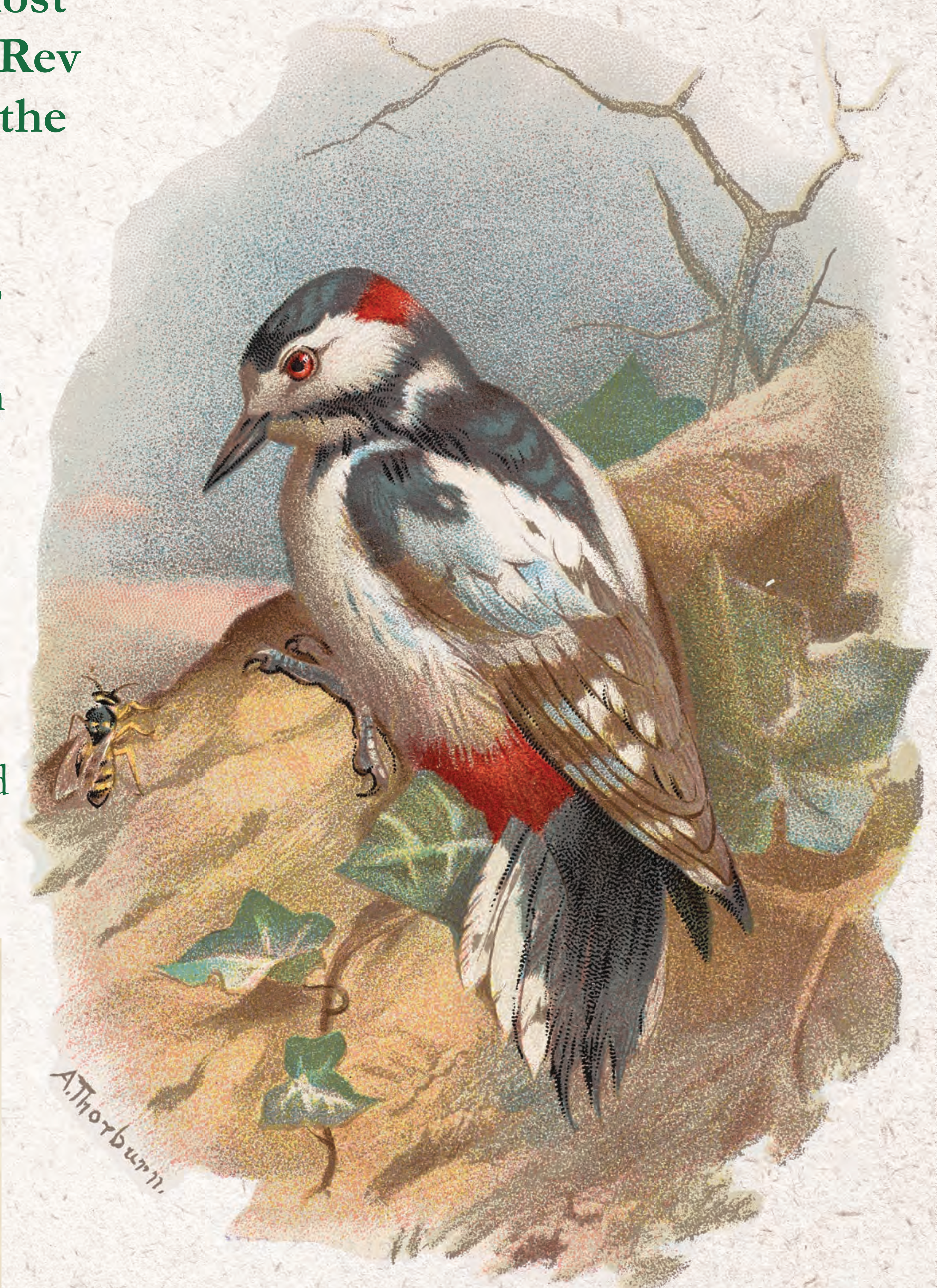
Ornithologist Joseph Whitaker celebrated 'the considerable area of ancient woodland, largely consisting of fine old oaks, with a sprinkling of birch and an undergrowth of bracken' surviving in Sherwood Forest for birds. The oaks were ideal for woodpeckers and 'nearly all the old oaks of the forest have suffered the loss of their tops by the agency of wind and lightning, aided by natural decay.' Recently conservation agencies have provided funding to remove conifers from

around the surviving oaks and to fence areas so that traditional grazing by sheep and cattle can be reintroduced. This is producing a new landscape, but one akin to that of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Landowners, government agencies and conservation charities are working to conserve characteristic fragments of heathland and woodland in Sherwood Forest and to encourage the coppicing of ancient woods such as Treswell Wood and Gamston Wood on the clay soils of eastern Nottinghamshire.



Engraving of a tree struck by lightning at Norwood Park, Notts, 1801, from *A Continuation of the Annual Meteorological Register, Kept at Mansfield Woodhouse 1800-1801*. *East Midlands Special Collection* Not 273.C42 CON



Greater Spotted Woodpecker from *Familiar Wild Birds, Volume 4*, by F Swaisland (Cassell, c1883). *Porter Collection QL690.G7 SW4*



Above: Nightjar from *Rough Notes on the Birds Observed During Twenty-five Years' Shooting and Collecting in the British Islands* by ET Booth (Porter: Dulau, 1881-1887). *Porter Collection Over:XX QL690.G7 BOO*

