

Warwick Natural History Society

Snippets

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70TH ANNIVERSARY – A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY!

Our visit to Brandon Reserve is now arranged for **FRIDAY 18TH OCTOBER**.

We will be meeting at 11.00 am in the courtyard and tickets will be £5 each to include a sandwich lunch and refreshments in the Barn, followed by a talk. Tickets will be available at all meetings prior to the 18th October. There will be no charge for access to the Reserve for all those joining us for lunch.

We would like to see as many members as possible coming along to celebrate this Anniversary, so please contact either Barbara Cuttell (barbaracuttell@gmail.com) or myself (wesandlinda@btinternet.com) in order that we can have accurate numbers of those attending.

Jephson Gardens Tree Walk – 1st August

On a hot sultry afternoon, 21 members joined Lesley for a walk around the gardens looking at the wonderful trees, which had helpfully been identified by the Council in readiness for an upcoming Arts in the Park event!

There were several Indian Bean Trees with large impressive flowers, splendid Ginkgo and Maples (Norway, Sugar and Silver), Tree of Heaven was sprouting up in many places leading it to also be known in other countries as 'Tree of Hell'! The Persian Ironwood was identified – so dense that it sinks in water.

Fortunately, there was plenty of shade whilst we all absorbed a great deal of information throughout a very enjoyable afternoon.

1st August LW



On 25th July I was at Hartland in North Devon and saw these Swallow chicks being fed by a parent in the roof of St Nectan's church porch. A lovely sight.

1st August KB

Moths at Ryton Pool

A recent visit to Ryton Pool to hear a talk given by warden Ben Coleman introduced me to the wonderful world of moths. I had no idea there are 2,500 moths in the UK. Or that 1600 species have been recorded in Warwickshire, with 831 at Ryton Pool. We are lucky to live so close to such a reserve.

Over 100 species of moths fly by day and are identified by their wings when outstretched at rest. Night flying moths are more tricky to find. Antennae are tapered, not club shaped like butterflies. Shape, colour and pattern help to identify them.

There are far more moths than butterflies and they are vital 'bio indicators', warning us of ecological changes such as a warming climate as many moths are now moving up north. As so many moths in caterpillar-stage get eaten by baby birds in spring it is amazing there are so many around...



The use of various types of moth traps with lights or pheromones help to identify moths in an area and we were shown several traps collected earlier that morning from the meadows. One by one Ben lifted the lids of moth traps – and like a magician revealed and named moths hiding on egg boxes below.

The biggest was a large and beautiful pink and gold Elephant Hawkmoth; an Olympic-sounding July Highflyer was a beautiful large mottled green moth. We saw Lesser Swallow Prominents, Carpet moths, pink Ruby Tigers, Small Phoenixes, Dusky Sallows, Dark Arches and a Drinker moth [so called as it is believed to drink the globules of water on plant stems], plus plenty more but can't recall all the names and failed to get photographs.



Drinker moth



Ruby Riger

All moths were shaken off egg boxes and released to fly away at the end of the session.

We walked round the scorching hot meadow afterwards to see some moth traps on site. The last week in July is an ideal time to see moths, we were told. It was a stimulating session and many of us U3A members purchased useful moth charts in the shop afterwards.

2nd August FW

Badger Cull

Labour stated in their election manifesto that the badger cull was unscientific and ineffective and that their control strategy would be based on more robust vaccination, testing programmes and better bio-security measures.

Our local Labour MP, Matt Western, has also stated that Labour would end the cull if they got into power. If you feel the cull should be stopped, please contact him to remind him of this commitment.

5th August BC

Moth evening at Abbey Fields

Thirty six people, including a few from WNHS, assembled with David Brown at Abbey Fields on a warm evening, courtesy of Friends of Abbey Fields. With an array of equipment, including generators, moth traps and cables, David set up everything beneath a tall tree near the river in a sheltered spot and kept us all informed about moths while the bright light failed to entice many to the expectant gathering.



While I was there a yellow Brimstone moth was captured and passed around in a transparent container for all to admire but other night flying moths refused to join us in while I was there...three others were trapped later.

Our leader's abundant enthusiasm and his encyclopaedic knowledge filled the gaps admirably to create a memorable evening even if the lack of cloud wasn't helpful for nothing. The decline of moths over the last fifty years is of great concern - maybe such moth evenings will become a rarity all too soon.

Thank you David, for inspiring us all to look out for UK moths when out and about, in daytime or evenings. There are over 2500 species around to spot.

10th August FW

I had quite a search through July and early August to find one of each of the usually common butterflies.

Meeting people doing Butterfly transects, you hear the same sad news.

12th August SG



Remarkable Bees

Did you know that bees are capable of making substantial journeys in search of a queen, flying long distances over water?

An experiment, inevitably dubbed Game of Drones, has for the first time tracked the male bees on the Isles of Scilly by marking hundreds of the insects with different coloured dots to signify each island. They have found the bees travel around the archipelago in pursuit of a queen, sometimes a mile or more.

(Daily Telegraph 12 August)

Snippets to Linda please at: wesandlinda@btinternet.com

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