

Warwick Natural History Society

Snippets

No. 157

23rd July 2026

You can follow the Society on Bluesky

<https://bsky.app/profile/warwicknathistsoc.bsky.social>

There are a particularly large number of swifts in Warwick this year. They seem to like the heatwaves. Members of the Warwick Birding group have reported a large gathering - 20+ - over Cape Road, a similar number screaming over Linen Street, parties of up to 8 along The Butts, and there have been up to 12 over the Kingfisher Pools in St. Nick's Park. They arrived a little late this year, but now seem to be making up for lost time, with nesting in the usual sites in The Butts, Chapel Street and West Street.

9th July RT



(Stock photo)



I think this is a Clearwing Moth. Perhaps *Synanthedon tipuliformis*?



ID

Narrow-headed Ants

The Daily Telegraph reported on 10th July that a colony of one of the UK's rarest ants and its queen have been found living on the King's Balmoral estate. The narrow-headed ant is only known to survive in a handful of locations and was found by a ranger who had worked on the Cairngorms Ant Project, taking place at the Mar Lodge Estate about 10 miles away. This amused me considering the size of an ant – how on earth do you identify a narrow-headed one?

11th July LW

Warwick Tree Walk – 16th July

Lesley led 16 members on a delightful walk around Warwick to look at its many notable trees. Starting in Pageant Gardens, we stood in the shade of the magnificent Sweet Chestnut before inspecting the many wonderful trees around the town.

We admired the spreading Red Snake-bark Maple (*Acer capillipes*) from Japan in the small garden at the front of the Unitarian Chapel in the High Street and then moved through to the Market Square.

One of the rarest specimens was the Maple leaved Crab (*Malus tribolata*) to be found near the Market square which has white flowers followed by red/yellow berries – an unusual specimen to be found here.



Other rare specimens were the Persian Ironwood, from forests south of the Caspian Sea, and the Small-leaved Azara from the Andes. All were very interesting and included Tulip trees, Indian Bean trees, Silver-leaved Lime, Black or White Mulberry trees, the Grey Snake-bark Maple (*Acer rufinerve*), the Judas tree (*Cercis*) and the row of beautiful all-white bark Himalayan Birches in a row behind the bus station.



Many thanks to Lesley for a lovely afternoon in our local town.

18th July LW

(*Arum maculatum* in the churchyard)

Three moths seen in a garden in Harbury on a warm sunny morning, revealed from a moth trap. There were many more - amazing how many nocturnal moths are alive in our gardens!

One of the largest was Swallow Prominent that fly from May to June or July. Caterpillars might feed on aspen, poplars and sallows in woodland, scrub and parks.



A beautiful Riband Wave moth with distinctive markings is common in grassland and urban gardens, flying June to September. They mate, lay eggs and small caterpillars overwinter until spring until they emerge as adults.



A tiny Ermine Spindle moth is common in gardens, woodland and parks but lives only 1-3 weeks but the full cycle is 12 months. Caterpillars can defoliate trees and cover branches with ghostly silk webs. Damage is usually temporary, apart from fruit trees where fruit is ruined. The moths symbolise purity!



20th July FW

The searing July heat has suited Bumblebees and Butterflies, but insects generally are lower in number and variety. To my delight, I have been extremely lucky to find some Picture Wing flies. The Knapweed Ghost is well-named and nearly missed on the unopened Tansy. A Spectacled Berry Fly on a Tansy flower displayed striking wings before dipping underneath. More commonly seen, *Tephritis formosa* causes galls on Hawk's-beard, Cat's-ear and Sow-thistle flower heads. Exciting to find female and male *Phasia hemiptera* together on mint. A male Great Pied hoverfly's wings are unmistakable beside the colourful Batman hoverfly sporting the logo on its thorax. My last treat was watching a Ruby-tailed Wasp moving around my hand, tapping its antennae looking for hosts' nests.

21st July SG



At Hinton's Walled Garden, a very brief video of Hummingbird Moth at Verbena. Be ready with the off switch as Youtube takes you elsewhere very quickly!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pCyG3WiznLM>

21st July SG

Warwickshire Lavender Farm

You may have seen this farm mentioned on the Midlands News recently and we decided to go and have a look today. The farm started out in 2016 as a dream hobby for retirement, providing a beautiful



environment and lovely foraging for bee hive residents. It moved to the present site in Watery Lane, Bubbenhall in April 2019 when the first Lavender plugs were planted.

The lavender is spectacular – with endless blue flowers stretching into the distance. The Lavender Café is open during field opening times with all profits going to charity.

Entry to the fields is £8 and they are open from Wednesday to Sunday 10 – 4.00 pm until August 9th and are well worth a visit.

www.warwickshirelavender.com

22nd July LW



BIG BUTTERFLY COUNT - Until Sunday 9th August

Don't forget to take part in the Big Butterfly Count which is so important to monitor butterfly populations.

It was first launched in 2010 and Butterfly Conservation says that counting butterflies can be described as taking the pulse of nature. Just 15 minutes counting butterflies and dayflying moths in a sunny spot – what's not to like? You can record your sightings on the app or website:

<https://bigbutterflycount.butterfly-conservation.org/>



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