

Visits to Whitwell Woods 13th July 2020 & 31st July 2020

Graham & Eileen Gill and Mick & Linda Fairest went on a (social distancing!) butterfly “safari” to Whitwell Woods on 13/7/20 but due to inclement weather decided to re-visit on a better day in July.

Here we are again on 31st July 2020 (third hottest day ever recorded in UK!). Luckily we had chosen an excellent location as we were well shaded under the dense canopy for most of the time and it remained pleasantly warm. We had taken a packed lunch intending to make a day of it.

We took the left hand path through the top entrance and made our way to pick up the circular walk which brought us to a shaded picnic table that we used as a “base” as this area proved to be the most productive part of the wood for butterflies. This appears to be due to the fact that Barry Russ a butterfly enthusiast has for many years carried out an introduction of butterflies which he has reared from eggs to improve their survival. This was the second time we had bumped into Barry this month (complete with butterfly net on this occasion as he was carrying out his own activities). A lady came by who was also doing butterfly recording and we spent time with her chatting about our sightings so far that morning. Butterflies in this area included the Silver Washed Fritillary, some females of which, the Valezina, is a special form where the orange on the wings is replaced by a beautiful greenish pearl effect. These sightings made our day. Also seen was a male Speckled Wood butterfly defending its domain (a leafy shrub) against any other butterfly passing by regardless of size i.e. Large White, Fritillary, Comma etc. This behaviour provided many minutes of entertainment for us, similar to Corvids harassing any Buzzard which happens to fly over close by.

After lunch we continued following the red route taking in the pond where we had hoped to see the many dragonflies that normally frequent this area but on this occasion they were absent! We slowly made our way back to the cars having recorded everything we had seen on 13th & 31st July. As we stepped out of the wood into the car park the heat hit us, had we arrived in the Tropics, NO just a UK 1 day heatwave!

Our flower count was down on this second visit due to the council having mown the wide verge between the lay-by and the main Worksop road.

Reporter: Linda Fairest

Butterflies

Ringlet, Green-veined White, Meadow Brown, Speckled Wood, Small White, Large White, Comma, **Silver Washed Fritillary (including Valezina form), White Admiral**, Peacock, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Common Blue

Insects

Leaf Miner, White-tailed Bumble Bee, Carder Bee, Cardinal Beetle, Hornet, 7 spot Ladybird.

Botanical

Tufted Vetch, Meadow Vetchling, Meadow Sweet, Hogweed, Creeping Thistle, Nettle, Creeping Buttercup, Yellow Pimpernel, Bramble, Herb Robert, Wood Avens, Wound-wort, Enchanter’s Nightshade, Goose Grass, Great Willowherb, Burdock, Red Clover, Ribwort Plantain, Betony, Lords & Ladies, White Water Lily, St. John’s Wort sp., Bird’s-foot Trefoil, Black Knapweed.

Birds

Chiff Chaff, Jay, Carrion Crow, Woodpigeon .

Mammals

Stoat, Grey Squirrel

MALE SILVER WASHED FRITILLARIES



FEMALE SILVER WASHED FRITILLARY





WHITE WATER LILY (NYMPHAEA ALBA)

WHITE ADMIRAL





LORDS AND LADIES

SPECKLED WOOD



BLACK BRYONY



FEMALE COMMON BLUE

