

Open Day 4th July 2021

Up to the last moment it was uncertain if our Open Day would go ahead. After the long enforced break we were keen to open up the reserve and meet visitors again. As it turned out visitors were keen to come out again too. It had rained heavily in the night and it was still raining when we arrived early to set up the activities. There was a large puddle across the entrance to the meadows. We were very surprised to find the car park full, cars parked down the sides of the road and many people milling about. It turned out that Duke of Edinburgh Award walks were being started from the car park. They promised that they would be gone by 8:30 and they were. We put up the gazebo in the rain and looked anxiously at the sky hoping for an improvement.

The first person who arrived joined the Friends, bought a book and made a donation - an encouraging start. The sporadic showers died out and it turned into a nice day. People shrugged off the rain and the wet meadows determined to enjoy the experiences. It was good to welcome so many young people from babes in arms to teenagers. We had a steady flow of visitors who kept us busy and engaged throughout the day. Numbers were down on previous years; but were encouraging considering the conditions.

The bird spotting was popular. Using the telescopes proved to be as challenging and rewarding as usual. The ever-present birds such as the Cormorants, Great Crested Grebes, Common Terns and Grey Herons always gave something to focus on. The passing birds such as the Kingfisher, Mandarin Ducks, Reed Bunting and the Buzzard rewarded the lucky and quick viewers. We had filled the feeders for the day and they attracted Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Great, Blue and Marsh Tits and Goldfinches.

The moth display was fascinating. People were surprised that there are so many species of such different sizes and that some are so colourful and attractive. Their strange names are intriguing too.

The bird ringing was very popular. Some of the more unusual birds were caught. Lucky visitors got to see a Kingfisher, Reed Warblers, Grey Wagtails and a Treecreeper up close in the hand.

The meadow pond was productive after its dredging and year of rest. The dippers enjoyed catching newts, beetles and dragonfly larvae as well as many mysterious minute creatures.

The refugia sheets worked well. One repeatedly revealed a grass snake and a slow worm - plus a mouse on one occasion. The snakes are shedding their skins and one excited boy was carrying a skin home.

The bee keeping demonstration was fascinating and several visitors enjoyed the honey.

It was an eye-opener for people to see how large and varied the meadows are. They do not realise how big the nature reserve is and how much the Friends look after.

As always the refreshments were popular (even though we could not offer hot drinks this time).

There was a lot of interest in our 25th anniversary book. We sold 8 copies. We welcomed several new members to the Friends and some existing ones renewed their memberships. Over the day we received income from: book sales; membership fees; the refreshments; honey sales and donations.

Many volunteers worked very hard to make the Open Day such a success. A big thank you to you all. Special thanks to Joy, Sue and Judy for running the stalls throughout the day and to Marie, Sue and Judy for the lovely cakes. Also thanks to Gough's Pet Store in East Grinstead who kindly loaned us their gazebo and who support our event and to Paul Clark a local moth enthusiast who kindly helped with the moth display. It is good to be back again.

Bird Sightings - 34 species

West End – Car Park:- Blackbird, Blackcap, Reed Bunting, Common Buzzard, Chaffinch, Chiffchaff, Cormorant, Carrion Crow, Mandarin Duck, Mallard Duck, Little Egret, Goldcrest, Goldfinch, Greylag Goose, Great Crested Grebe, Black-headed Gull, Herring Gull, Grey Heron, Kingfisher, Linnett, Magpie, Nuthatch, Robin, Barn Swallow, Mute Swan, Common Tern, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Marsh Tit, Pied Wagtail, Reed Warbler, Whitethroat, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Woodpigeon.

Pond Dipping

Blood worm, Flat worm, Phantom midge larva, Water Louse, Diving beetles and larvae, Caddis Fly larvae, Newt, Waterboatmen - greater and lesser, Freshwater Shrimp, Midge and Gnat larvae, Snails - Pond and Ramshorn, Mayfly larvae, Water mite, Azure damselfly, Dragonfly nymphs - different species, Damselfly nymphs, Cyclops and Daphnia, Stonefly larvae, Water Stick insect, Water Scorpion, Pond Skaters - two species, Whirligig Beetles, Great Diving Beetle, Frog.

Bird Ringing

2 Chiffchaff, 2 female Grey Wagtail, 2 female Whitethroat, 2 juvenile Treecreepers, 1 Marsh Tit, 1 Kingfisher, 1 female Blackbird, 1 male Blackcap.
Noticeably low numbers of juveniles (just the Treecreepers); it is one of the earliest dates we have held the open day and there has been poor weather this year.

Moths

Bloodvein, Beautiful Hook Tip, European Corn Borer (migrant), Clouded Border, Small Elephant Hawkmoth, Rhubarb and Custard (recent colonist), Mottled Beauty, Diamond-back, Spectacle, Lobster, Peacock, Ghost (f), Common Emerald, Green Pug, Great Oak Beauty, Peppered, Elephant Hawkmoth, Poplar Hawkmoth, Pine Hawkmoth, Scorched Wing, Small Magpie, Pale Prominent, Buff-tip, Buff Ermine, Leopard, Brimstone, Pebble Hook-tip, Codling, Heart & Dart, Tawny Marbled Minor, Holly Tortrix, Swallow-tailed, Grass, True Lovers Knot, Willow Beauty, Dot, Common Marbled Carpet, Dark Arches, Purple Clay, Buff Arches, Small Yellow Wave, Marbled White Spot, Small Fan-foot, Double Square Spot, The Flame, Large Yellow Underwing.

Photos from Open Day - 4th July 2021



Early view of the west end.



Welcome - refreshments;
book sales and moth display.



Bee hives and honey.



Pond dipping platform.



16-spot Ladybird.



Otter Spider.



Trecreeper - ringing.



Large Skipper.



Ringlet.



Cantharis rufa
Soldier Beetle



Malthinus flaveolus
Soldier Beetle



Rhagonycha testacea
Soldier Beetle

Friends of Weir Wood Society

 A photograph of a brown grass snake coiled on the ground among dry grass and twigs.	 A photograph of a small brown vole partially hidden in a nest of dry grass and twigs.	 A photograph of a long, reddish-brown slow worm crawling on dark soil.
<p>Grass snake</p>	<p>Vole</p>	<p>Slow worm</p>
 A photograph of a dark, elongated water scorpion insect on a light-colored surface.	 A close-up photograph of a purple flower spike on a green stem.	 A photograph of several dark purple caterpillars with white spots on a green leaf.
<p>Water Scorpion</p>	<p>Woundwort</p>	<p>Peacock Butterfly Caterpillars</p>
 A wide-angle photograph of a field of meadowsweet plants with numerous small white flowers.		
<p>Meadowsweet</p>		

thj 18/07/21