

## DONINGTON & ALBRIGHTON LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

Big news this month – we’re hosting a bat and moth night on Saturday September 7<sup>th</sup>. It will take place in the Meadow between 7.30 and 9.30pm and we really hope to see the whole family.

You may have read “bat” and thought ah great, sonic navigation with beeps we used to be able to hear but no longer can, should be really interesting. You could then have read “moth” and thought hmm., boring little grey jobs that attempt a form of hara-kiri whenever near a light bulb and have an unerring taste for ones best jumpers, may leave before the moth guy gets going...

I assure you you would be missing a treat. Until recently that is exactly what I thought but I couldn’t be more wrong. We have a fabulous range of beautiful moths right here under our noses, we just need to know how and where to find them. A fine example of just such a moth can frequently be seen in the Meadow at the moment – the cinnabar moth. No way is this moth drab and boring, it has fabulous bicoloured bright red and charcoal wings. It actually got its name from cinnabar pigment, the red mineral artists used to use in painting. It is this moth that is responsible for all the caterpillars in their Wolves strip on the ragwort in the Meadow. The caterpillars also love groundsel but as this plant prefers a rich soil it isn’t present in the Meadow in any great numbers.

The butterfly survey continues and August was a fantastic month for spotting them. Our Volunteer has spotted the large, small and green-veined white, the orange tip, peacock, small tortoiseshell, comma, red admiral, brimstone, speckled wood, ringlet, meadow brown, gatekeeper, large skipper, holly blue and painted lady. Quite an impressive list which demonstrates just because our Meadow isn’t full of showy in your face flowers it has an increasingly good range of habitats and foods for a range of insects.

We have been continuing our battle with Himalayan Balsam in the Nature Reserve. We’re desperately trying to remove, or at least strim it before it sets seed as it attempts to impede the flow of the waterways through the Reserve. The only good thing to say about it is it provides a wonderful late crop of food for bees.

Another battle has been our one against docks in the Meadow. They have been topped twice this year in an attempt to at least reduce the amount of seeds that are spread. The dock was described as an “injurious weed” under the UK Weeds Act of 1959 which seems a bit harsh as it acts as a host for many different insects including the knot grass moth. But it is very invasive, and will take over whole areas if not controlled.

If one needed evidence of the power of Nature to regenerate itself one needed look no further than the pile of debris we dragged from the Pool and had to leave temporarily at its side. What was a mound of muddy branches is now a verdant flourishing new willow carr. We are hoping to remove this very soon, weather permitting.

We are hoping to start, amongst other things, some basic entomology and horticulture courses at the Red House this Autumn as we have been joined by an expert in this field. More details to follow.

Something else to look forward to is the appearance of name labels on some trees in the Meadow. They are expensive so only a few will appear at a time

Our next Volunteer Day is Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> September. Our numbers are growing which is fantastic as there is so much more we would love to do but we have to spend a lot of time on routine

maintenance. Paul Fallon ([paulfallon6@gmail.com](mailto:paulfallon6@gmail.com)) is the person to contact for more information. Further Volunteer dates are Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 7<sup>th</sup> November and 5<sup>th</sup> December

September 7<sup>th</sup> Moth and Bat Night. Don't forget