



RINGWOOD NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Fiddleford Manor Walk

Date: 13th July 2022
 Weather: Light cloud and warm, 27 degrees
 Walk Leaders: Jean Crawford and Pat Holder
 Attendees: 12

In the midst of a heatwave, we were fortunate that it was overcast and cooler for our walk today. Fiddleford Manor is a medieval manor house, situated in the tiny hamlet of Fiddleford near Sturminster Newton. Probably originally built around 1370 and is now owned by English Heritage. It is open to the public to visit throughout the year. There is an adjoining building to the north which is still a private residence. The manor had undergone many extensions and alterations over the years and was left derelict by 1962, when only the original section of the building remained habitable. This passed into state ownership and underwent restoration during the 1970's by the government department now known as DEFRA.

There has been a mill on the River Stour at Fiddleford for nearly a thousand years. The first reference to a mill was in the Domesday book of 1087. At that time it is believed that the mill was actually on the site now occupied by the manor house. The current mill was in use from the 13th century up to the end of the 20th century but is disused now. During the latter part of the 18th and early part of the 19th centuries, the mill was used to store contraband. This was shipped up river from Stanpit and Hengistbury Head on the coast by smugglers.

Our walk started after we viewed the Manor House, we crossed over the weir bridge to follow the Stour Valley Way to Sturminster Newton. From the bridge there is a fine view of the Archimedean Screw installed in 2013 to generate electricity for the local supply. We followed the River Stour into Sturminster Newton having had a picnic lunch beside the river. Sturminster Newton is a town and civil parish in the Blackmore Vale area of Dorset. It is situated on a low limestone ridge in a meander of the river. The town is at the centre of a large dairy and agriculture region, around which the town's economy is built. After visiting a local cafe we started our return walk from the Station Road car park, formally the site of the railway station. Opened in 1863 the old Somerset and Dorset railway ran steam-hauled trains between Bournemouth and Bath. Sections of the old railway line are now used as a walking, cycling and horse riding route which took us back towards Fiddleford.

Flowering Plants	Flowering Plants	Birds	Insects
Pineappleweed	Common Club Rush	Kestrel	Butterflies
White Clover	Common Reed	Wood Pigeon	Gatekeeper
Red Clover	Great Plantain	Jackdaw	Large White
Spear Thistle	Hedge Bindweed	Swallow	Small White
White Dead-nettle	Common Mouse-ear	Buzzard	Common Blue
Broad-leaved Dock	Water Forget-me-not	Long-tailed Tit	Small Tortoiseshell
Yarrow	Hedge Bedstraw	House Sparrow	Red Admiral
Daisy	Opium Poppy	Reed Bunting	Meadow Brown
Red Campion	Fat Hen	Moorhen	
Dandelion	Creeping Thistle	Mallard & ducklings	Dragonflies etc.
Bramble	Common Poppy		Banded Demoiselle
Creeping Buttercup	Butterfly Bush		Red-eyed Damselfly
Field Bindweed	Common Sorrel		Emperor Dragonfly
Shepherds Purse	Perforate St. John's Wort		
Stinging Nettle	Cornflour		Beetles
Hogweed	Ivy-leaf Toadflax		Four-banded Longhorn
Scentless Mayweed	Marjoram		Soldier
Great Willowherb	Greater Celandine		

Garlic Mustard	Feverfew		
Catsear	Common Toadflax		
Lesser Burdock	Dovesfoot Cranesbill		
Himalayin Balsam	Wild Teasel		
Common Comfrey	Ribwort Plantain		
Black Mustard	Creeping Cinquefoil		
Smooth Sow-thistle	Mugwort		
Arrowhead	Broad-leaved Everlasting Pea		
Purple Loosetrife	Tufted Vetch		
Water Figwort	Small Teasel		
Woody Nightshade	Fennel		
Black Nightshade	Nipplewort		
Knotgrass	Fruits		
Meadowsweet	Walnut		
Yellow Water-lily	Lords-and-Ladies		
Autumn Hawkbit	Blackberry		



River Stour at Fiddleford by Lyn Traves