

Eastrington Nature Reserve visit – Sept 22



What a wonderful, peaceful place that proved ideal for the hot day the 14 members experienced.

We had the pleasure of 4 new member on the visit Paul and Hilary, Nadine and Simon.

The path took us on a circular route through a leafy glen following the red dots on the map above.

The nature side was fairly quiet but that was only to be expected at this time of year. We saw several herons and both dragonflies and damselflies were in abundance. As we proceeded around the reserve, we came across several tree stump carvings and some lovely water Lillie's in full bloom. Alder Leaf Beetles were in the hundreds and as the photo shows only the skeleton survived. There was plenty of Black Bryony with many colourful berries.

One observation that we noted was the excellent condition of the Oak trees compared to the others in the wood. The Blackberry brambles were in a desperate state, there being no fruit as such. The water level in the ponds were also noticeably low, mainly mud in the outside ponds.

Merv, our fungi expert as you will see had a very busy afternoon looking for Knopper Galls.

Knopper galls develop as a chemically induced distortion of growing acorns on pedunculate trees, caused by gall wasps, which lay eggs in buds with their ovipositor. The gall thus produced can greatly reduce the fecundity of the oak host, making this gall potentially more of a threat to the reproductive ability of the tree than those that develop on leaves, buds, stems, etc.

The Turkey oak introduced into Britain in 1735, is required for the completion of the life cycle of the gall.





Alder Leaf Beetles



Speckled Wood



Harvestman Opilio (Spider)



Ruddy Darter;



Boletus rubellus (but that's rare!);



Poor Blackberry display through lack of water



Knopper Gall on an acorn

Other species of galls Merv spotted were seen on the following trees. **Hawthorn, Sloe, Alder Salix**

All-in-all, a very enjoyable afternoon.

Paul Sears