

LOCAL FLORA AND FAUNA GROUP

Report for 2016

The group was started as a result of the new members' meeting in 2015 with our first meeting taking place in March 2016.

None of us has specialist knowledge but the aim has been to learn more about local wildlife by means of going for strolls of about 2 to 3 miles in the local countryside. Our main focus has been wildflowers but we have also been interested in looking at butterflies, fungi, birds and mammals.

We have been meeting about every 3 weeks, visiting a few different areas and where possible we finish the walk with a visit to a pub or cafe.



Our very first visit back in March was to Coulsdon Common and Happy Valley when we had to search out the early spring flowers. By June and July the flowers were so abundant that remembering their names became much more of a challenge! We recorded a grand total of 69 different flowers on a wonderful visit to Farthing Downs in glorious weather at the end of June. We also identified 6 different types of orchid in the Happy Valley area. We visited Quarry Hangers on the North Downs, and Colley Hill which were both overflowing with flowers and also gave us wonderful views when we remembered to look up!



Knapweed with marbled white butterfly

Bladder Campion



By October the flowers were few and far between so we went for a walk looking for fruits and berries as well as identifying the different trees and shrubs and admiring the wonderful autumn colours.

Spindle berries



For our final walk of the year in November we changed the emphasis to bird watching. During our walk around Holmethorpe Lagoons we managed to see a fair selection of birds including several winter visitors. Some of our members were even lucky enough to get a good sighting of a kingfisher. We hope to start 2017 with a visit to the British Wildlife Centre in March to get a close up look at the many British mammals which have so far been hiding from us in the wild.

Even if we don't remember the name of every flower we have seen over the year, we have certainly all learnt to look much more closely at what is around us - a walk in the countryside will never be the same again!