



# BRITISH NATURALISTS' ASSOCIATION

## The National Body for Naturalists

### **Weekend Workshop at Brandon Marsh** nature reserve near Coventry 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2023

The weekend consisted of several workshops over the two days, including microscopy, moth trapping, flowers, grasses, insects, bats and general natural history. The aim was to enable members to study specialised subjects and learn from the leaders who are all experts in their subjects.

Brandon Marsh is a flagship reserve of the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, with an excellent mix of open water, marshland, grassland, scrub and woodland, on what is an almost entirely a brownfield, post-industrial site.



Photos of the reserve: Dr. Chris Gibson

Wild flower meadow ecology and grass identification, were led by Dr. Chris Gibson. Who found some of the more natural grassland remnants were covered in Yellow Rattle and Eyebright, Lady's Bedstraw and Common Knapweed, and both Common Spotted- and Great Butterfly- orchids. Other plants seen were Common Centaury and Perforate St John's-wort.



Common Centaury, Perforate St John's-wort, Eyebright





Knapweed, Common Spotted - and Greater - Butterfly Orchids

The moth trap led by Pauline Rutherford, with help from Chris Gibson, produced a good haul, including such crowd-pleasers as Elephant and Poplar Hawk-moths, Buff-tip, Pebble Prominent and many others.



Photos: K. Hinchcliffe



Photos: P. Rutherford

Microscopy, led by Roy Stewart on both days, gave everyone the chance to view parts of insects and plants in detail, using prepared specimens and Victorian slides.



Photos: K. Hinchcliffe



Other leaders included Hon. Chairman Steve Rutherford doing three walks – plant galls, bugs and beetles and ecology of the Small-leaf Lime coppice woodland. Hon. President Roger Tabor led a general natural history walk, amazing everyone with his knowledge on plants and their uses. Mark Dudley, an expert in Hoverflies took his group onto the scrub area and searched for species using sweep nets. Dr. June Chatfield led her group, focusing on insect pollination and flower fertilisation. Saturday evening saw everyone returning to the reserve at dusk to hear Steph Holt explaining the ecology of bats and their roosts.



Steve on some of his walks Photos: K. Hinchcliffe



Mark Dudley (Hoverflies), Roger Tabor (general natural history) June Chatfield (pollination and flower fertilisation)  
Photos: L. Artindale.

Photo: E. Beer



Chris Gibson (flowers and grasses) and Steph Holt (bats) Photos: L. Artindale



A group shot to end the weekend Photo: J. Demidecki