

Looking at the Countryside 21 May 2022

Six members of IWNHAS joined Dave Fairlamb of Natural Links for a Looking at the Countryside event at Alverstone Mead on 21 May 2022. The nature-themed walk started in Alverstone village and we headed east along the cycle path, accompanied by bird song, with Blackcaps, Greenfinches, Song Thrushes. Wrens and Chiffchaffs in fine voice. A Common Whitethroat obligingly sang in full view on a telegraph wire, with Swallows feeding over the wetlands and a Buzzard soaring high in the sky.



Common Whitethroat



Blackcap

Masses of Comfrey and Cow Parsley brought colour to the riverbank and the path edges were adorned in the blues of Germander Speedwell, Forget-me-not and Green Alkanet. A male Banded Demoiselle settled on vegetation by the river and further down the track the reedbeds offered a chance to compare the songs of Sedge and Reed Warblers, with occasional loud bursts of Cetti's Warblers and a distant Reed Bunting. As we approached the pools near the Sandown Community Orchard, several other damselflies were on the wing including Common Blue, Azure and Large Red, fluttering amongst the Yellow Iris, Hemlock Water-dropwort and Gipsywort.



Banded Demoiselle



Large Red Damselfly

Several species of butterfly were active including Speckled Wood, Brimstone, Red Admiral, Peacock and Green-veined White. Looking out from the woodland hide, a Moorhen was seen with young

near to the flowering beds of Bogbean and a Black-tailed Skimmer darted over the water. We had a close encounter with a Red Squirrel along the main woodland path, though not as close as the lady who was feeding the squirrel from her hand, also surrounded by Mallards and Great Tits.



Speckled Wood



Peacock

Both Green and Great Spotted Woodpeckers were heard around the woodlands and Bluebells were still in bloom along with some other noteworthy plants including Climbing Cordylis, Marsh Cinquefoil and Lesser Spearwort. We completed the circular walk to the sound of Blackcaps, Common Whitethroats and Song Thrushes.



Great Spotted Woodpecker



Bluebell

For more information on Natural Links events on the Isle of Wight and Wildlife/Birdwatching Holidays across the UK and abroad contact Dave Fairlamb on natural.links@outlook.com



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