



RINGWOOD NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Fiddleford Manor Walk

Date: 17th July 2025
 Weather: Warm and sunny
 Walk Leader: Pat Holder
 Attendees: 12

Our walk started at Fiddleford Manor; it 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 weir 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
Catsear	Greater Bindweed	Swallow	Butterflies
Yarrow	Red Campion	Buzzard	Green-veined White
White Clover	Field Bindweed	Wood Pigeon	Meadow Brown
Yellow Water-lily	Bristly Oxtongue	Guinea Fowl	Gatekeeper
Creeping Buttercup	Prickly Lettuce	Moorhen	Red Admiral
Hogweed	Knotgrass	Mute Swan	Large White
Smooth Hawksbeard	Greater Celandine	Mallard	Speckled Wood
Daisy	Feverfew	Kingfisher	Comma
Prickly Sow-thistle	Mexican Fleabane	Wren	
Common Teasel	Ivy-leaved Toadflax	House Martin	Dragonflies etc.
Ribwort Plantain	Spreading Yellow Sorrel	Blackbird	Banded Demoiselle
Scented Mayweed	Common Mallow	Jackdaw	Four-spotted Chaser
Stinging Nettle	Pineappleweed	Carrion Crow	Emperor
Himalayan Balsam	Common Ragwort	Long-tailed Tit	
Hedge Bindweed	Common Toadflax	House Sparrow	Others
Dandelion	White Musk Mallow	Magpie	Grass Moth
Creeping Thistle	Perforate St John's Wort		Dock Bug
Great Willowherb	Hedge Bedstraw		Soldier Beetle

Small Hairy/Hoary Willowherb	Marsh Thistle		
Meadowsweet	Tansy		
Redleg	Broad-leaved Everlasting Pea		
Oil-seed Rape	Tufted Vetch		
Spear Thistle	Shepherd's Purse		
Yellow Loosestrife	Common Fleabane		
Bramble	Fat Hen		
Arrowhead	Wood Dock		
Bittersweet	Scentless Mayweed		
Purple Loosestrife	Dovesfoot Cranesbill		
Small Teasel			
Common Club Rush			
Red Clover	Fruits		
Common Reed	Walnut		
Greater Plantain	Lords-and-Ladies		
Common Comfrey	Blackberry		
Meadow Buttercup	Damsons		
Intermediate Burdock	Sweet Chestnut		



Speckled Wood Butterfly by Lyn Traves



Small Teasel by Lyn Traves