

**Derbyshire Wildlife Trust/British Dragonfly Society Dragonfly Identification Workshop Hilton Nature Reserve 9<sup>th</sup> August 2003.**

An excellent day getting to grips with Dragons was organised by The British Dragonfly Society's Tim Beynon and David Goddard along with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust Education Officer Sara Smith. The eager audience of 20 or so spent the morning at Hilton Parish Hall learning all about Dragonflies from the fossil record of 350 million years ago all the way through to today's Derbyshire Dragonflies and their habitat requirements.

David and Tim imparted their wealth of knowledge using a slide presentation and printed handouts before everyone decamped to the DWT Trust reserve at Hilton Gravel Pits to see them for real.

There was good mix of experienced watchers to folk who were keen to learn as much as they could from the enthusiasts around them. Within yards of entering the reserve Dragons were on the wing. Hilton allowed everyone to have brilliant views of Ruddy Darter. At least 33 were seen many posing allowing many photo opportunities.



**Male Ruddy Darter** *Sympetrum sanguineum* Hilton Gravel Pit DWT reserve 09.08.03 photo by Andy Shelbourne. This male is 'Obelisking' or 'sky-pointing'. In very hot weather darters adopt this curious posture, in order to prevent themselves over heating.

**Migrant Hawkers** were sharing air space with patrolling **Brown Hawkers** whilst David gave a running commentary. Jim Alder kept the rear of the group up to speed whilst Tim 'White Faced Darter' Beynon was on point. Nine species were seen very well. Even this year's unofficial county rarity (There haven't been many around!) **Southern Hawker** gave it self up.

David netted the damselflies to allow very close views with the aid of a hand lens and even caught Ruddy Darters. This was the fun bit with people "entering the net" to come face to face with a dragon!



**Debbie Court DWT Wildlife Sites Officer having a close encounter with a Ruddy Darter *Sympetrum sanguineum***  
Hilton Gravel Pit DWT reserve 09.08.03 photo by Andy Shelbourne

The day produced the following list

<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Number</b>
Brown Hawker	14
Migrant hawkler	4
Southern Hawker	2
Ruddy Darter	33
Common darter	9
Emerald damselfly	16
Azure Damselfly	3
Blue-Tailed damselfly	8
Common Blue Damselfly	33

The weather was brilliant although some felt it was little too hot! Even the dragons thought so by three o'clock with many seeking shelter in the shade. However everyone learnt a great deal and thought the day a great success.

David would like to run an exuvia identification workshop in the winter. This would certainly be some thing to look forward to.

DWT & BDS may have started something so a big thank you to all involved.

It was good to see a few of the [www.Derbyshire-Dragonflies.org.uk](http://www.Derbyshire-Dragonflies.org.uk) Recorders out in the field having a good time!

We certainly "went Dragoning' today!"

Richard T Taylor



**David Goddard in search of Dragons!** Hilton Gravel Pit DWT reserve 09.08.03 photo by Andy Shelbourne