

Renishaw Dragonfly Safari July 14th 2003

With clear blue skies and soaring temperatures the scene was set for an ideal afternoon out in the field.

Richard Taylor and Jim Alder met up with around 15 eager people to discover the dragonflies of Renishaw Park. Stephen Fidler the Estates Tourism Officer gave an introduction to the site before everyone entered the formal gardens to check out the lily pools. Male Blue Tailed Damselflies were performing on the lily pads giving everyone chance to get to grips with them. Jim Alder rescued a three-winged teneral Common Darter that was doing the backstroke at the time. Charlie, as he was christened gave everyone their first close dragon encounter of the day, allowing many photographs to be taken and the chance to hold a dragonfly. Charlie amazed everyone, once he had dried out, by flying up into an Oak Tree. His first attempt had been a good impression of an Ash Key, spiralling out of control onto the ground. Charlie then accompanied the group down to the main lakes sitting on Richard's finger.

We strolled through the woodland garden where we found a teneral violet (violacea) female form of Blue Tailed Damselfly perched up allowing everyone to have a good look. We scanned the leaking Pool and saw two male Black-tailed Skimmers, where we later saw 5. Soon the air was alive with Dragons and Damsels. Brown Hawkers patrolled above our heads whilst the grass around our feet buzzed with damsels including Azure, Blue-tailed and Red-eyed Damselflies. Emperor Dragonflies were the masters further out over the lily pads clashing with Four-spotted Chasers. A pair of Common Darters was seen mating and the first of three Ruddy Darters perched on Richard's other index finger! At this point Charlie flew off.

The surface of the lakes was home to hoards of damselflies. Jim found a male Emerald Damselfly hiding in the reeds whilst Peter Stoppard pulled a female Banded Demoiselle amongst a hoard of Red eyes. Some of the group saw a Kingfisher whilst two immature Kestrels soared overhead agitating the Swallows. We all hoped for Hobby but to the Dragonfly's relief no joy! We were all quite parched in the high temperatures, nudging the 80s So we headed back for Ice cream and a look at the evolution of Dragonfly books from 1937 to 2003 before those that were left called it a day.

Species seen.

Banded Demoiselle 1f
Red-eyed Damselfly 100+
Common Darter 6
Emerald Damselfly 1f
Brown Hawker 5
Large Red Damselfly 3
Emperor Dragonfly 4m1f
Azure Damselfly 50+
Four-spotted Chaser 5
Common Blue Damselfly 20
Black-tailed Skimmer 5m
Blue-tailed Damselfly 23
Ruddy Darter 3



here's to the next one, ' lets go dragoning 'RTT