

Editorial Comments

In this Issue, I have highlighted some of the aspects that need all of our attention, if we are to continue to enjoy the benefits of Foxglove for another 20 years. Elizabeth and Brian have shown what can be achieved with a mixture of inquisitiveness and determination when they started to study the Ladybirds on the Reserve; there are now 12 species of Ladybirds on the Species List and they have added two of these and confirm three others that have not been seen for some time. If you have an urge to learn more about an aspect of natural history that we know little about why not consider looking at the ferns or lichens or even spiders on the Reserve and help to extend both your knowledge and add to our records at the same time!

The contributions from Richard and Sally illustrate the work being done by two of our new Management Committee Members to support the financial needs of the Reserve. And finally can I thank all those readers who have supported me over the last ten Issues and wish Richard all the best as your new Editor of Undergrowth!

Membership Cards

Current Friends of Foxglove Covert will shortly be receiving a credit card sized laminated membership card. A review of the benefits offered to Friends is currently underway and the membership card is seen as a first stage in this process.

What's On?

You know that winter is just round the corner when you find that the next three months include Worky Days planned for 6th October, 3rd November and 1st December and the Richmond Coffee Morning on 8th November. Contact the Reserve Managers or look on the Website for more details.

Tom

Celebrating the First 20 Years

Friends and Volunteers at Foxglove are always ready to party and the 20th Anniversary of the 'discovery' of Foxglove seemed like an excellent reason to have a BBQ. The photographs show some of the people, young and not so young, enjoying the fine weather, excellent food and great music provided by Compass Rose. A very special day to celebrate this momentous occasion!



Thanks to the Reserve Managers and their team for taking the time to organise the event.

Ladybirds – Species new to Foxglove?

Sophie discovered a new ladybird walking near the Ash trees at what has now become known as Kidney Spot Corner on 18th September 2010 (see photograph below). This was a new species for the Reserve. The ladybirds stayed there all winter and into the spring and early summer, so allowing us, with great confidence to take school parties there and say 'Look, Kidney Spot Ladybirds!!' During the summer we noticed some tiny brush like 'things' walking around on the trees and upon investigation found that these were the larvae of the ladybirds. Further study revealed that they ate a species of scale insect. Careful observation saw these 'tiny brushes' moult several times before turning into pupae (see photograph on top right) and then the adult, at which point finding the newly hatched adult ladybirds on the trees became very difficult as they chose to go walkabout onto the fuel store and picnic table! Ideal places of course for scale insects to grow!

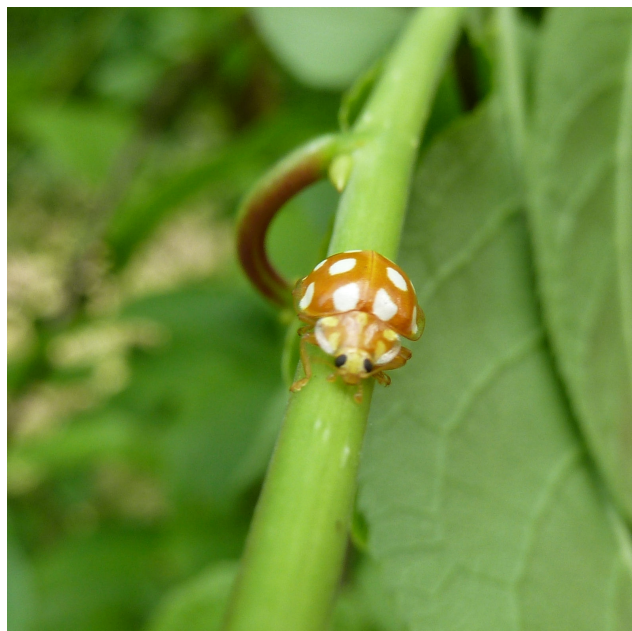


During the winter we searched many of the Ash trees on the Reserve and on some found the Kidney Spot Ladybirds. We also observed them on other species of tree but they did not appear to stay here for long. They were also found in the woodland but few at Kidney Spot Corner. During the summer of 2012 only a few adults and larvae have been found.

We were extremely lucky to find larvae and pupa of the 7 Spot Ladybird and follow their development, just outside the Field Centre during the summer of 2011. If the pupa is touched, as a defence mechanism, it flicks its bottom about, somewhat off putting to a predator! And again many children and adults viewed them!



As autumn slipped into winter so the invertebrates of Foxglove hibernated and the ladybirds were no exception. 7 Spot Ladybirds who had had an excellent year in 2011 were found hidden in the Gorse, in the small conifers, on marker posts and inside tree tubes. Alongside these ladybirds we found Orange Ladybirds (see below) and the occasional Larch Ladybird.



In April 2012 it snowed. Foxglove was covered. We set off to check for damage and noticed something bright red on a bowed branch; upon closer investigation there were three ladybirds, 2 identified immediately as 7 Spots but the third was a concern. It was caught and examined and found to be an Eyed Ladybird and not as initially feared a Harlequin (see photograph on next page).



By the end of April, the Bird Cherry was in full leaf and being attacked by many insects, including greenfly. So it was worth a quick look to see what else was present. 7 Spot and Eyed Ladybirds were seen, at times apparently huddling together. It is noticeable, in the photograph below, that the Eyed is larger than the 7 Spot.



As the weather eventually warmed up, so the ladybirds left their hibernation sites and – disappeared! Sightings of any ladybirds this summer have been rare, although another new species was recorded, the 14 Spot Ladybird. It will be interesting to see if hibernation sites are used again this winter.

There is a leaflet kept in the office to help with identification of ladybirds.

Elizabeth and Brian

Grant Seeking and Fund Raising

It is not possible to begin a section about the Grant Seeking and Fund Raising effort at Foxglove Covert without sincerely thanking all those who have been involved. Thank you everyone for your expertise, knowledge, support and enthusiasm. It's a challenging and complex task to raise the £100,000 annually that it takes to run Foxglove Covert and it involves many people in many different ways.

A huge amount of work happens quietly and behind the scenes to continue to secure funding and other support from MOD Estates. All of this support is key to meeting the Reserve's most basic needs and costs and we must never take for granted either the generosity of the MOD nor the considerable effort that it takes to achieve this support year after year.

To date we have secured funding for the following:

£385 donated by the Wensleydale Branch of the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England to fund the planting of a wild bird food crop, which can now be seen growing.

£5000 donated from the MOD Community Covenant Fund to purchase new equipment.

£3085 donated by the John Spedan Lewis Foundation (a Charitable Trust of the John Lewis Partnership which supports the study of natural sciences), for the purchase of new bird ringing equipment.

We would like to make public our sincere and grateful thanks to each of these organisations for their generous and valued support.

We also had successful days of raising both funds and awareness at the Richmond Coffee Morning (£282), Catterick Market (£366) and at Tesco Catterick Garrison (£450 and £246).

We are working on a number of other applications and projects including securing the long term financial future of the Reserve. We would be extremely glad to hear from anyone who would like to help with the fund raising effort or who has identified any funding sources that we could explore. We are also interested to hear about any venues, events or functions that you think might be useful fund raising opportunities. Your help would be greatly appreciated!

Sally

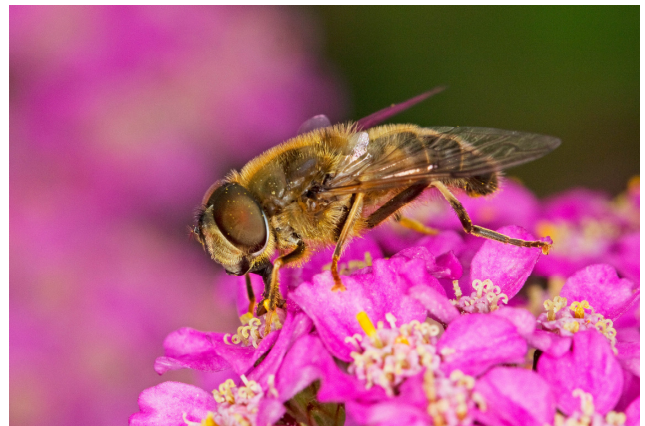
Top 10 Tips for Better Macro Photography

The Reserve recently provided a venue for an intense one-day course for budding wildlife photographers. Richard Witham describes how to achieve such excellent close-up photographs. Ed



To get the most out of your photographs here are my top 10 tips:

1. **Get down and low:** photographing a bug at its eye level can add to impact and give the photograph a more natural aspect.
2. **Watch the foreground and background:** take time to ensure that there are no distracting items in front of or behind the bug; a blade of grass is not always visible when you are setting up the shot but will spoil the picture if it cuts straight across the subject.
3. **Focus on the eyes:** the eyes are generally the most important focal point for a picture.
4. **Be stealthy:** most bugs will flee if it sees a potential predator approaching (unfortunately a photographer is perceived as such).
5. **Use flash:** many cameras have an inbuilt flash, which can be used to help illuminate the subject.
6. **Watch and wait:** take time to study the subject before rushing in to take a photograph.
7. **Include the environment:** a close up of a bug can be rewarding but putting the bug into the context of its environment can also result in a more satisfying picture
8. **Know your subject:** you don't need to have a university degree in nature but getting to know about the life cycles and habitats of your subjects can help you to get that elusive shot.
9. **Get out there and practice:** the advent of digital cameras has revolutionised photography, the expense of film no longer an issue.
10. **Enjoy:** very few people will be on a deadline to produce results therefore, take time to enjoy your environment, photography should not be a chore but a pleasure.



Richard

Articles for inclusion in future issues are welcomed by the editor at: foxglovelnr@btinternet.com.

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