



A Walk around Grindleford

By Brian Hobby

On the wonderfully sunny Saturday of 3rd May 2014, 19 people gathered at Grindleford station for a bluebell walk through the woods and down to the River Derwent. We had only just started walking when an orange tip appeared followed by a siskin in the tree above our heads and a garden warbler sang its heart out in the nearby tree. We crossed over the bridge and on to our first stop for a quick look at Padley Chapel.

Padley Hall (or Padley Manor) was a large double courtyard house where, in 1588, two Catholic priests, Nicholas Garlick and Robert Ludlum were discovered and then, two weeks later, hung, drawn and quartered in Derby. They became known as the 'Padley Martyrs'. Padley Hall today is mostly in ruins, although part of it, probably originally the central gatehouse range, survives and, in 1933, was converted to a Roman Catholic chapel in honour of the martyrs. The chapel, a Grade I listed building, stands not far from the railway line, a short distance west of the station. A pilgrimage takes place every year in July.



Padley Chapel

Before we had continued very far we stopped again for a very small 22 spot ladybird on a nettle leaf, followed by a sighting of a peacock butterfly and swallows flying overhead. What a beautiful day! Willow warblers seemed to be everywhere even in the wych elm beside the track and at the top of an oak a tree pipit sang its heart out and some of us managed to take good photos of it. Next we saw a small tortoiseshell butterfly, but were interrupted by someone shouting 'pied flycatcher' which got everyone's attention. Most people saw the flycatcher and for those that didn't it was just one of the many that we saw later during the day. Beside the

track we came across a very old sweet chestnut tree, so gnarled but still clinging to life. Our next butterfly was a speckled wood, just before we reached a wood ant nest - a huge affair - with equally huge ants everywhere. This was just one of the very many that we saw amongst the hundreds of bluebells that carpeted the floor of the woodland. As we dropped down to the river a redstart sang in the top of a tree and at the river a very young dipper bobbed up and down on a log in the water, looking as if it had been told to stay there by its parents who continually flew up and down the river. There were also mandarin ducks, male and female and goosander which really sparkled in the sun.

Betty noticed ramsons, just coming out, beside the river as well as great woodrush. More butterflies were seen, particularly the green veined white, brimstone and a comma. It certainly was a good day for butterflies.

As we left the river several flowers were seen including pennywort growing in the walls on Padley Chapel as we passed by on our return to the station café for lunch. The people at the back spotted a grey wagtail from the bridge but most had hurried on to order their lunch.

In the afternoon we returned to the bridge and then took the track up Padley Gorge towards the Longshaw Estate. Here we really did get some terrific views of the pied flycatchers, both male and female, which seemed to be flitting in several trees. We took the higher track above the gorge and reached the open moorland area and here green hairstreak butterflies were taking full advantage of the warm, calm conditions to feed up on the bilberry. There were at least 16 spotted, although we gave up counting after that. The photographers had a field day, with bottoms stuck up in the air as they crouched down to take pictures. Along with the bilberry, there was ling heather and at the edge of the woodland climbing corydalis spread out amongst the grass. At the top of Padley Gorge there were several families enjoying the sun, so we rapidly hurried on. A bog beacons fungus, *Mitrula paludosa* - described as being widespread but infrequent in Britain - was spotted by Vaughan along the track back towards the bridge and café.

I am sure everyone enjoyed this very fruitful walk made all the more enjoyable by the sunny weather.



Grindleford





A WALK AROUND GRINDLEFORD KEY TO COLLAGE ON PAGE 9

1. The Moors above Padley Gorge – Bill Grange
2. The Woodlands in Padley Gorge – Bill Grange
3. Green Hairstreak Butterfly – Steve Plant
4. Pied Flycatcher – Christine Maughan
5. Redstart – Christine Maughan
6. Dipper – Christine Maughan
7. Mandarin Drake – Christine Maughan
8. Grey Wagtail – Christine Maughan
9. Song Thrush – Christine Maughan
10. A gall on an oak sapling caused by the gall wasp, *Trigonaspis megaptera* – Steve Plant
11. Northern Wood Ant (*Formica lugubris*) – two workers carrying a mouldy leaf, the other the remains of a caterpillar
12. Yellow Archangel – Bill Grange
13. Orange Tip Butterfly, male – Christine Maughan
14. Cream-spot Ladybird (*Calvia quattuordecimguttata*) – Steve Plant
15. Common Carder Bumble Bee – Steve Plant
16. Heather Beetle (*Lochmaea suturalis*) – Steve Plant
17. Pill Beetle (*Byrrhus pilula*) – Steve Plant
18. A species of ground beetle (*Poecilus cupreus*) – Steve Plant

All the photographs were taken on the walk

smelling slime attracts flies to carry off the spores in the same way as stinkhorns, only this fungus smells far worse!

It is remarkable that it is surviving so far north. However, there has been one more recent record just north of Derby, so there may be more of these aliens lurking elsewhere in the city. It can be seen fruiting at Alvaston Park in most years, usually following late summer rain. To find it look in the first shrub bed as you turn the corner to enter the car park.

Stages in the Development of a Clathrus Fruit Body by the author



The Aliens Have Landed!

By Peter R Smith

Two years ago Derby City Council staff were cutting back evergreen *Berberis* shrubs at Alvaston Park when they discovered around 100 strange white eggs that were soft and gelatinous in texture. After a few days these started to open and, from each egg, around five long red, star-fish like tentacles emerged covered in a putrid stinking dark green slime. The smell was unbearable from a downwind position. It was all the stuff of aliens from outer space. In fact, it was a species of fungus called devil's fingers, *Clathrus archeri*.

It was originally described from Tasmania and is frequently found in New Zealand and Australia. It was probably introduced to Britain by the spore laden sticky slime sticking to shoes of travellers returning from abroad. In Britain it usually only survives in the milder condition in the extreme south of England in Cornwall & Devon. It is a member of the Clathraceae family, one that contains many strange and weird fungi and is related to the stinkhorns. The foul-