

# The Natural History of Sutterby

Welcome to the programme of natural history and wildlife events taking place in and around Sutterby in 2015.

The emphasis this year is on 3 aspects:

- improving identification skills,
- carrying out more surveys and increasing our records, and
- continuing to monitor and develop the churchyard as a wildlife friendly area.



If you have been involved with this strand of the project before then welcome back - there's still plenty to do!

If you are new, then I hope that there are events/activities which might tempt you to get involved.

As ever, the aim is to learn, identify, record and have fun.

Last year we recorded, with some help (!), 250 different species in and around the churchyard. The big target in 2015 is to increase that number to at least 500. I am assured that this can be done....

Whether you are a casual observer, a moth expert or simply a slug lover please feel free to come along to one of the sessions.

Any queries, questions or suggestions, please get in touch.

*Denise Wheatley*

## **2015: the year for: Improving our identification skills by:**

Teach-ins, workshops, access to id guides and linking in to local experts and organisations, in person or via the web, for help with identification.

### **Teach-ins**

These practical sessions will run on a regular basis.

Some will be weather dependent and need to be organised at short notice. If you are interested in any of the following sessions, please let me know and I will notify you as the sessions become available. They will normally run for approx 2 hours in the evening or at the weekend. The exceptions being the moth counts, which will run in the morning.

### **Moth counts with Beth Dawson.**

These will run on a monthly basis starting, weather permitting, in February. The sessions run in the morning with Beth sharing her knowledge and id skills as we empty the overnight moth trap.

### **Grasses: for beginners with Roy Harris.**

Roy will run a practical id session at Sutterby. Grasses—not an easy botanical area, but one which with enthusiasm and our knowledgeable teacher I am sure we can (begin to) master.

### **Beetles concert with Charlie Barnes.**

Following the success of last year's session, Charlie has agreed to return and continue our introduction to the world of beetles. There are over 4,000 different beetles in Britain, but fortunately not quite that many at Sutterby.

### **Wild flowers with Julia Brocklehurst.**

We are somewhat short of these in Sutterby churchyard at present.

However, hopeful that this deficiency will be remedied over time, we are attempting to improve our wild flower id skills in readiness. Julia has kindly agreed to lead wildflower walks in the local area, where we can begin to hone our skills.

### **Bees and insects with Dr David Sheppard.**

Tying in with the National Pollinator Survey (see Part 2 of Programme. Surveying & recording for details), David will be leading the teaching as we develop our bee identification skills in particular and our insect skills in general.

## **Slugs with Chris du Feu**

We are fortunate in tempting Chris, the county recorder, to Sutterby to lead our slug survey. Not a single slug species has been recorded in the churchyard so far - we aim to remedy this. See Sutterby Slug Fest event under 'Workshops'.

## **Spiders with Imogen Wilde.**

Imogen is hoping to be able to run a session for us, looking at spiders in general and Sutterby spiders in particular. We have no spider records at present, so this will be a new and interesting area. Apparently there are only 700 species to tackle, so a lot easier than beetles...

## **Workshops**

There are 3 workshops organised at present:

### **Natural history photography: for identification & recording with Les Binns**

- Saturday, April 25th 9am—4pm

Langton Village Hall

This workshop aims to give students the skills necessary to venture out with their camera and capture that elusive wildlife moment. The emphasis is on producing good photos as an aid to identification and recording.

A digital camera is required—compact or complex.

(part of the 'See you later, Pollinator' initiative)

**Places limited. Booking required.**

### **Sutterby Slug Fest**

- Saturday, May 16th 10am—4pm

A Workshop with Chris du Feu.

Langton Village Hall and Sutterby churchyard.

All you ever wanted to know about slugs—and more!

The morning will be spent in Langton Village Hall, where we will update and augment our slug identification skills.

After lunch, we will head off to Sutterby churchyard for some practical recording.

**Places limited. Booking required.**

### **Red with green spots— recording the unknown.**

- Date TBA Weather dependent. Early May.

A practical session with David Sheppard in the churchyard covering how to make a good wildlife record in general and more particularly how to record the unknown...

## Access to id guides

Good identification skills are the key to good records. There will be links added to the website to direct people to sites, which can aid with identification. Please keep an eye on the website.

Key guides and guide books will be available on site when small group surveying takes place.

## Local identification expertise

Over the last year the project has established working links with a number of county recorders, the Lincs Wolds Countryside service and Charlie Barnes of the Lincolnshire Naturalists' Union and the Greater Lincolnshire Nature partnership.

Any id queries, of which we may have many, will be passed on for verification/ identification.

## Recording & Surveying.

2014 -250 species.. and counting.

2015—500 species ....

Can we do it? Double the 2014 total in 2015?

Last year saw an influx of records to the Lincolnshire Naturalists Union. Sutterby went from a standing start to a very impressive 250. This year whatever it is, whether it is green and stationary or yellow and buzzing, we need to record it.

The emphasis this year is on recording and surveying the churchyard and, with permission, its immediate environs.

A number of practical recording and surveying sessions will be organised. However, it would be helpful if people noted down anything they saw whilst in the churchyard or whilst in the immediate vicinity. Nothing is too trivial or too common.

The more records we can amass the better. If you don't know what it is then a brief description, drawing or photo would be appreciated.

There will be a folder on the nave window sill in which to leave your records or alternatively you can email [naturesutterby@gmail.com](mailto:naturesutterby@gmail.com)

## Bees and insects

*'See you later, Pollinator'*



We are aiming to support the National Pollinator Survey 1 and the Bees Needs 2 initiative by studying, surveying and recording the pollinators in and around the churchyard.

David Sheppard will be helping with this and we intend to run a number of events and activities. The aim is not only to survey Sutterby but also to improve our id skills so that we can record pollinators in our own gardens. All the records we collect will be of import.

## References

1. [www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-pollinator-strategy-for-bees-and-other-pollinators-in-England](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-pollinator-strategy-for-bees-and-other-pollinators-in-England)
2. [www.beesneeds.org.uk](http://www.beesneeds.org.uk)

## Birds

We are asking everyone to record the birds they see and/or hear whilst in the churchyard. (This includes birds flying over the church!)

On a more structured note, there are records for Sutterby in the BTO (British Trust for Ornithology) Atlas 2007-11. Our aim is to survey again and to compare the results with the Atlas.

One of the project volunteers was involved with the BTO survey and has kindly agreed to help compile the update. If you would be interested in helping with this, please contact [naturesutterby@gmail.com](mailto:naturesutterby@gmail.com) 01790 754079.

As some of you will know, last year barn owls nested in the owl box concealed in the west end of the church. We are hopeful that we will have breeding success again this year. Garry Steele, who was involved with the barn owl relocation project when the church restoration was carried out, still monitors the Sutterby owls and will keep us updated.

## **Sutterby Rock Festival.**

With the help of Mike Badley and John Aggett, we are underpinning the natural history research with a look at the hidden landscape of Sutterby and the Wolds.

The Sutterby Rock Festival is in 3 parts:

- Tuesday, February 24th

Dr Mike Badley will be talking about the geology of the Wolds.

A chance to place Sutterby into its geological context.

Conference Room, Franklin Hall, Spilsby 7.30pm

- Wednesday, April 15th

John Aggett will be talking about fossils and ancient environments of Lincolnshire.

Conference Room, Franklin Hall, Spilsby 7.30pm

- Saturday, June 27th

There will be an excursion with our 2 tutors to help us read and interpret the landscape in and around Sutterby and the Wolds. Plus a chance to see the famous Sutterby marl at first hand.

**Booking required. Numbers limited. If you are interested please e-mail [naturesutterby@gmail.com](mailto:naturesutterby@gmail.com) 01790 754079.**

**There may be a charge for this event.**

*These are all introductory events—no previous geological knowledge required.*

## **Sutterby Churchyard**

Sutterby church sits in its landscape and fits into its landscape. We know from old photographs that the churchyard used to be a grassy haven for wildlife. Now the nettles are taking over and important pollen and nectar reserves are being subsumed beneath an impenetrable blanket of nettle roots and runners.

The field adjacent to the churchyard has a selection of grasses and wild flowers. If we can allow the churchyard earth to 'breathe', then it is likely that it will be re-colonised by native plants. These will bring the important nectar and pollen reserves which will help to sustain and increase the insect population.

So, the aim this year is to control and remove some of the nettles and to see what returns in the way of flora and fauna. Our surveying and recording will provide interesting information over the coming months as we monitor the plot.

No orchids yet, but who knows....