



River Dipping in the Lugg

On a warm and humid Saturday June 20th, twenty-three people gathered on the north bank of the River Lugg just along from Wergin's Bridge, walking through a field of hay brimming with damselflies, for a spot of river dipping.

Mary Roberts, who lead the group, provided nets, trays and insect specimen pots loaned by the Nature Trust. Seven family groups swooshed their nets in the river to see what they could fish out and put in trays for identifying.

A range of eleven different species were discovered:

Water scorpion, bullhead fish, water bug, pond skater, water boatman, leech, snail, fresh water mussel, fresh water shrimp, damselfly larva, swimming mayfly nymph.

The range of species is encouraging as it puts the river somewhere in the middle in terms of water cleanliness. Fresh water shrimp, mayfly nymph and damselfly larva will only survive low levels of pollution, whilst the other species will tolerate some pollution but cannot survive really dirt water.

The River Lugg suffered in the past by increased intensity in agriculture and changes in water management, which affected the water purity. Improved land management practices has a positive impact on the ability of smaller creatures and plants to survive and thrive in the river. This in turn encourages increased numbers of larger creatures back to the river.

Following the enjoyable river dipping activity, everyone made their way back to the Village Hall for craft activities. The children, and the adults, made an array of colourful tissue paper fish, transparent coloured dragonflies on sticks and hopping paper frogs. The craft activities were as much fun as much as the dipping, and were enhanced by some excellent freshly baked biscuits!

A big vote of thanks goes to Mary Roberts who created such a successful and enjoyable day, and to Islwyn Williams who allowed access to his lovely hayfield by the river.

Sutton Environment & History Group

Judy Stevenson 01432 880748 judy@creswells.co.uk