

Craigavon Lakes

13th June 2015



Leader Brian Nelson

It had been a cool May and we hoped for warmer, sunnier days in June so that insects would be in flight.

The flight muscles need to be kept at a suitable temperature for a dragonfly to be able to fly. Being cold-blooded, they can raise their temperature by basking in the sun. Early in the morning, they may choose to perch in a vertical position with the wings outstretched, while in the middle of the day, a horizontal stance may be chosen.

Another method of warming up used by some larger dragonflies is wing-whirring, a rapid vibration of the wings that causes heat to be generated in the flight muscles.

As we arrived at The Craigavon lakes the sun was trying to break through the clouds and we were hopeful that we would have some sunshine. We walked along the upper path and saw four **Cryptic White** butterflies (*Leptidea juvernica*) on the wing – they have a slow, persistent flight and so were easily netted and Brian took the chance to demonstrate the difference between the Wood White and Cryptic. He showed us the rounded wing shapes, black edge at the very top of the wing, the underside has grey/greenish markings often appearing almost pearl-like.

We walked along the edge of the lake and began to see **Common Blue** (*Enallagma cyathigerum*) and **Blue-tailed Damsel** (*Ischnura elegans*) on the wing. Brian was able to reinforce his winter lecture by showing us the details of their bodies and how they were identified.

We walked round the lake and again the sunny intervals encouraged **Common Blue** butterflies (*Polyommatus icarus*), micromoths *Eudonia delunaella* and *Micropterix calthella* (found in great numbers sitting in the buttercup flowers) into flight.

We headed for the bridge at the railway line and the sheltered area there was full of insects. We counted eighteen Common Blue and four Cryptic Wood White butterflies as well as six **Small Heath** (*Coenonympha pamphilus*). Some worker bees were spotted *Bombus pascuorum* and *Bombus lucorum* sp

We saw and heard a **Black Cap** (*Sylvia atricapilla*) singing and watched a **Reed Bunting** (*Emberiza schoeniclus*) sitting on the railway fence.



Enallagma cyathigerum



Ischnura elegans



Polyommatus icarus



Leptidea juvernica



Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)