

Warwick Natural History Society

Snippets

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20th May 2026

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Jephson Gardens has so much interest especially at this time of year.

The breeding swans near the Crown fountains had 3 cygnets visible on the nest with the pen and was closely watched over by the cob circling on the water in the background.



A heron stood on one of the Crown fountains awaiting its next meal to swim by.

A male mallard was sunbathing on a tree branch overlooking the pool some way from the ground. The



purple stripe with white edging was showing well on its wing. It's known as a speculum.



The Tulip trees were just coming into flower. The flowers are very striking with the orange ring at the base of the petals...if you can manage to spot them camouflaged against the new leaves.

9th May LD

***Swifts** have now returned to the UK to breed and rear their young before returning to their African wintering grounds in August. They need sunshine, long hours of daylight and a climate which best produces the abundance of insects upon which they rely – a pair can devour up to 20,000 in a day. If our weather continues to be grey and drizzly, the birds could well retreat and zoom back over the Channel for a few days mini-break until the weather clears up.*

*Their piercing screams can be heard – if you're lucky, as their numbers are plummeting ... by more than 66% over the past 30 years. Decreasing insects and breeding locations are among key drivers of this decline but you can help by encouraging garden invertebrates through ponds and wild patches and installing 'swift bricks' high up in houses for them to nest.
(Daily Telegraph 9th May)*

In Bloom exhibition at Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

'In Bloom' exhibition at Ashmolean Museum, on until 16 August - is excellent. Free entry although you need to book in advance at www.ashmolean.org. It's all about how plants changed the world, the history of exploration, obsession and knowledge. On a journey to the farthest corners of the world, it reveals stories behind some of our best loved blooms, from roses, tulips, camellias... and much more.

For me it was the stories of early pioneering plant explorers that fascinated me, from 'tulipmania' in 17th century and 18th century methods of collecting, cataloguing and transporting specimens. So many of our historic houses and their amazing gardens are the result of rich Victorian landowners' efforts to bring back home safely many plants and trees from other nations.



Carl Linnaeus, a Swedish scientist, travelled in Lapland in 1743 and developed a classification of plants still used today. He is seen in native costume with his magnifying glass, ruler and other tools hanging round his waist while his books of pressed flowers surround him.

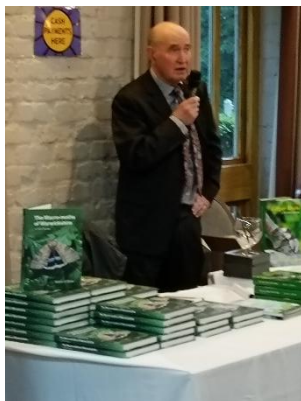
A Dutch female artist, Maria Merian, had a passion for insects and moved to live in the colony of Suriname. Her 1699 book is displayed showing a Bullseye moth in all its forms on banana blooms. She was one of the first to show insects in natural surroundings.



John Tradescant the Younger, Keeper of the King's Gardens, Vines and Silkworms brought back many plants from Virginia. Jacob Bobart the Elder was in charge of Oxford university's 'Physick Garden' in 1642 and catalogued plants in it. A beautiful modern tapestry Pollinator Pathways by Alexandra Ginsberg brings us up to date, depicting the view of bees and butterflies.

There are three floors in the museum together with lifts and an excellent cafe. Johnsons run a day express coach trip to Oxford on 7 August if you want a car free day.

16th May FW



Our Society's well-known butterfly/moth expert David Brown had a very successful book launch on Monday 18th May and the Charlecote Pheasant Hotel was packed with people eagerly awaiting the release of 'The Macro-moths of Warwickshire - A 2026 Review'.

The book is the culmination of an enormous amount of research and it is published by Butterfly Conservation with all money from sales of the book going to that Society.

Well done David!

Don't forget you can meet our expert on tomorrow's visit to Stockton Cutting!

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