

Newport Forest

September 24 2000

1:20 - 6:00 pm

Weather: cloudy, gradually clearing, cool 15C, N winds gusting

Purpose: to introduce the Caveney family to Newport Forest

Participants: Pat, Kee, Stan and Anita Caveney

It has rained through much of Friday night and Saturday afternoon, producing averages between 2 and 5 cm throughout the region. Water levels were up everywhere, although the main pulse from the Upper Thames watershed was arriving only to-day.

We came in convoy from London, parking in the usual spot, collecting a few chairs and bags, then heading to the Landing along Edgar's Trail. Before leaving the Lower Meadow we spotted a Clouded Sulphur (*Colias philodice*) and along Edgar's Trail we saw another butterfly, this time a Northern Crescent (ID: the Caveney). Stan also spotted an all-black caterpillar, rather like a Woolly Bear, but with no orange band. He later identified it as a Virgin Tiger Moth. (See New Species.) We all saw the two Great Blue Herons that soared over the River Landing before we got there,

At the Landing, we noted that the river had risen considerably since our last visit. The gravel bars were all deeply covered and the water had invaded half way up the drift pile just below the "sward." We prowled around for a while, exploring the vegetation. Was that really Wingstem growing all about us? What a coup that would be! We dug up a smallish specimen, only to find when we got home that it was Sneezeweed (a new species, nevertheless). Nevertheless, Pat found a number of familiar plants, including a Wood Nettle, a Cup Plant, and a probable Common Clotbur. Some Sandpipers feeding along the shore about 50 m downstream next caught our attention. Described by Anita as a "stout little bird," it had a white breast and rump, with the head darker than the wings. When it flew across the water, it stayed less than a foot above the surface. Unfortunately, these characteristics were not sufficient to make an ID. Shortly after a Monarch fluttered by, we decided to try the newly completed trail, entering along the Bluffs. The river came perilously close to the lowest part of the trail before we ascended the modest slope into the Riverside Forest.

Just inside the Riverside Forest, someone spotted some small, pale orange mushroom buttons sprouting from a log. (These later proved too young to ID.) We also saw two Downy Woodpeckers south of the trail. A possible new species of Ash (Red?) caught my attention. It stands just south of the trail within the first

100 m. We passed several of the larger trees in this forest, pointing out some of the giant Sycamores to the Caveneyns and hoping they were impressed. We made our way up to the shoulder of the Hogsback, where a large, whitish-brown mushroom grew on soil. We tried hard to ID this later, thinking it might be our first Milky, but it turned out to be a species of *Russula*.

We ascended the remainder of the Hogsback, where Pat found a Blue-stemmed Goldenrod, a Zig-zag Goldenrod and some Bristly Greenbrier. I pointed out a Chinquapin Oak seedling. We crossed the Hogsback and descended into the Blind Creek Forest. Here, Stan spotted a discarded Gypsy Moth pupa case on a tree trunk, with a web of eggs just a few inches away. Stan scraped the egg case from the branch, describing how they make a popping noise when burned.

Along the trail in the west end of the BC, Pat spied some bristly Greenbrier, a plant we were familiar with from A'Nowaghi, but had not yet found in the Newport Forest. A little further on, Stan and Anita pointed out some pale, orange-brown mushrooms growing in clusters on some fallen wood. Were they *Galerinas*? I collected some, later ID-ing them as *Mycena Leaiana*, a well-known look-alike for the Deadly *Galerina*. (These *Mycenas* have yellow gills with red edges, while the Deadly *Galerina* has an orange band on the upper stalk.) Presently, another species popped up, this one new. Stan and Anita spied a Shaggy Mane mushrooms on the soil beside the trail.

While peering into the willow forest beside us, Stan and Anita next spotted a Yellow-shafted Flicker on a dead tree in the middle distance. We watched it through binoculars for several minutes. Then Stan spotted a Tussock Moth caterpillar on a tree trunk, carefully recording its characters. Later he identified it as a Banded Tussock Moth. We were all entertained by the sight of a Raccoon snoozing the day away in the fork of a Black Walnut about 50 metres from the trail. It took no notice of us. I spotted some rounded holes on a Spicebush that were typical of those made by a Leaf-cutter Bee.

Finished with our walk, we emerged from the Blind Creek Forest Trail and took Edgar's Road to the Landing. On the way, Stan noticed a brightly striped caterpillar which had just anchored itself to a leaf prior to making its pupa. Unfortunately, none of us had sufficiently detailed reference materials to make the ID, even later in our homes.

We then had a delightful picnic in the swale, especially enjoying meats, cheeses and buns supplied by our guests. Since it was getting late, we packed up our

things to head out. I went down to the river to check the water-level, noting that water now covered the entire drift-pile. Out in the Lower Meadow, we walked over to Fleming's Creek, spying about 18 Goldfinches in a tree by the bluffs. Periodically, some would swoop down to feed on (native) Sunflowers, their heads nodding high above the other meadow plants. The creek was up, just over its banks. What a watery summer it has been!

The Caveney's could hardly leave without finding at least one more insect, so Stan located a brightly coloured red and black beetle on a milkweed growing at the edge of Harvey's beanfield. He explained that it was a leaf-beetle of some kind and he left the ID to us. Luckily, this turned out to be an easy task, as the markings were distinctive and the species a common one: the Swamp Milkweed Leaf Beetle. (This does not mean that the milkweed in question was a Swamp Milkweed, however.)

New species:

Shaggy Mane	<i>Coprinus comatus</i>	BC ac/KD
Bristly Green-brier	<i>Smilax tamnoides</i>	RBF PD
Sneezeweed	<i>Helenium autumnale</i>	RLD KD
Cup Plant	<i>Silphium perfoliatum</i>	RLD PD
Swamp Beggar Ticks	<i>Bidens tripartita</i>	BC PD
Zig-zag Goldenrod	<i>Solidago flexicaulis</i>	RBF PD
Blue-stemmed Goldenrod	<i>S. caesia</i>	RBF PD
Swamp milkweed Leaf Beetle	<i>Labidomera clivicollis</i>	LMD sc/KD
Woolly Bear	<i>Isia isabella</i>	BC SC
Virgin Tiger Moth	<i>Grammia virgo</i>	EDR SC
Gypsy Moth	<i>Lymantria dispar</i>	BC SC
Banded Tussock Moth	<i>Halysidota tessellaris</i>	BC SC
Leaf-cutter Bee	<i>Megachile sp.</i>	BC KD