



## Flitwick Moor invaded by scorpions, tigers and dragons!



PETER SUTTON

Pupils from the Biology Club at Redborne Upper School in Ampthill, led by Dr Kathryn Juty, have been studying wildlife at Flitwick Moor, and recently struck gold in one of the newly dug peat ponds. There are only six types of great diving beetle in Britain, and the pupils found three of

them at Flitwick. Amazingly, this included Bedfordshire's first-ever 'black belly' (below right) and 'the wasp' diving beetles (see Flitwick's secrets below). Great diving beetle larvae are among the fiercest creatures in a pond, which is why they are also called

water tigers.

They also found a long water scorpion (also called a water stick-insect), and ruddy darter, emperor (below left) and migrant hawk dragonflies.

All these from a bare peat pool! It will be interesting how the species mix changes over time.



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PHILIP PRECEY



**Greater tussock sedge** *Carex paniculata* – can form clumps a metre tall. We hope that the cattle grazing in new areas will help this impressive species to thrive.

DAVID CHAPMAN



**Amethyst deceiver** – fades and withers rapidly from bright, colourful and obvious to dull and confusing, explaining its name. It is one of over 500 different fungi at Flitwick Moor!

DAVID CHAPMAN



**Siskins** nest mainly in conifers, but they are often easiest to see feeding in alder trees in winter. You can sometimes still hear their trilling song at Flitwick Moor in the spring.

PAUL HOBSON



**Marbled white butterflies** are spreading north in England, possibly as a result of climate change. Despite the name, they are more closely related to brown meadow butterflies.

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The **barbastelle bat** is a rare and enigmatic species first found here in 2011. Very little is known about how it lives and what it needs, but Flitwick Moor seems suitable for it.

NEIL ALDRIDGE



Secretive **water rails** slip between the reeds. They give themselves away with their strange pig-like squealing, but are usually easier to see in the winter.