

## Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, Malvern Local Group meeting. 6<sup>th</sup> January

### Emperors, Dragons and Fair Damsels

A hundred million years before the dinosaurs, the skies were dominated by terrifying dragonflies the size of eagles. At their last meeting, The Worcestershire Wildlife Trust's Malvern group were entertained by Eden Tanner's tales of Emperors, Dragons and Fair Damsels – the world of dragonflies.

Eden, a local naturalist, has used his photographic skills to capture the drama and beauty of these supremely successful predators both in the air and underwater. The fossil record shows that in their 300-million-year existence, dragonflies have changed little, except in size. Of the 50,000 species world-wide, just 57 live in the UK, varying widely in size, shape and colour. The largest, the Emperors, often 8 cm in length, are an impressive sight whirring at up to 30 mph over reedbeds, catching insects on the wing, whilst the tiniest are the delicate damsel flies with lacy wings and iridescent colouring. We are familiar with them in flight, but most of their lives are spent as dragonfly nymphs living on the stream bed where they are fierce predators of pondlife ranging from snail larvae to tadpoles and small fish.

Next meeting: 7.30 pm on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> February at The Lyttelton Rooms, Church Street, Malvern. *Managing the Malvern Hills and Commons. Duncan Bridges. CEO The Malvern Hills Trust.* £2.50, all welcome.



Common Darter dragonfly



Migrant Hawker dragonfly