



Hampshire & Isle of Wight  
Wildlife Trust  
Protecting wildlife. Inspiring people.



## NEWSLETTER NUMBER 43

July 2012

Welcome to our Summer Newsletter. The main subject for conversation and conservation has been the weather. Since the last newsletter the weather has gone from one extreme to another. A warm and sunny March was followed by a cold and wet April, and it seems to have been wet ever since! To add to all this we have had gales just when the trees were in full leaf with a number of casualties, mostly suffering from large branches splitting away. The commonest trees affected were Ash, Beech and Horse Chestnut. This has, however provided lichenologists with access to the upper branches where many species of lichens can be found.

One result from this weather is the wonderful display of wild flowers by the end of June and the rapid growth of vegetation. June has been a very good month for grasses, not so good if you suffer from hay fever. This edition has details of walks, events and a preview of autumn and winter talks ahead.

### **Wildlife Walks in 2012**

So far this year walks have not been well attended, many perhaps put off by the weather. Whatever it does the walks have all gone ahead and have been enjoyed by the brave few.

We look forward to seeing you on walks, rain or shine.



*A wet Catherington Down 3rd May & On Shipwright's Way 21 June*

### **Walks ahead in the South Down Group area**

**Wednesday 11th July - Old Winchester Hill** 2 to 4pm. A chance to see Old Winchester Hill, led by the Site Ranger. This time a fairly level walk around the top of the hill to view butterflies and wild flowers. Meet at Reserve CP (MR SU 646 214) **Info.** 01329287653

**Wednesday 11th July - Blendworth to Chalton Windmill** 7pm Join us to explore the paths and views on Horndean and Blendworth Downs. Meet Blendworth Church Car park (MR SU 712 136) **More info.** ring 078 11435252

**Saturday 14th July - The Downs and Hangers around Idsworth** 10am to 1pm Join Trust members on a 3-mile walk to admire the flowers and wildlife around Idsworth and Wick Hanger with many photo opportunities. Some moderate slopes. Meet and park in the centre of Finchdean near the pub. at PO8 0AU (MR SU 738 126).

**Thursday 2nd August - Walk at Coulter's Dean Nature Reserve** 2 -4pm. Volunteer Reserve Manager Di Mitchell leads a walk to this beautiful nature reserve to view wild flowers and butterflies. Meet at Buriton Pond (MR SU 739 201) **Info.** 01329 287 653.



**First Aiders** Please note that all of our walks are led by qualified first aiders  
A donation of around £1.50 to HWTrust funds would be appreciated.

**Which way now ?**  
(Sign in Q.E.Park)

### **Meetings further ahead**

Our talks at St Wilfrid's Hall in Cowplain start again on

**Wednesday 10th October - The Red Kite and other Birds of Prey in Hampshire** **7.30 pm**

An illustrated talk given by Keith Betton. He is the Hampshire Ornithological Society's county Recorder for these wonderful raptors that fly above the Hampshire Downs and will giving some guidance on their identification.

**Wednesday 21st November - The Bats of Hampshire** **7.30 pm**

Nik Knight from the Hampshire Bat Group will give an illustrated talk with some sound recordings of these interesting creatures and will be mentioning some species that have been seen by members locally - a must for those helping us with local recording on our nature reserves.

Plans for 2013 - The committee are now making provisional plans for 2013 meetings and here are dates and subjects for talks being considered for next year.

**16th January** - *Wildlife in India*

**20th February** - *Amphibians and Reptiles*

**20th March** - *Life amongst the Leaf Litter*

**17th April** - *Wild Flowers in the Urban Environment*

These are provisional arrangements but the dates are confirmed and the usual venue has been booked. More detail will be given in the next newsletter that will be sent out at the end of September 2012.

## Nature Notes and Wildlife Observations for Spring 2012

**Bluebells** Not so good this year, many were in flower in March with an extended season lasting to the end of May and beyond, a longer season but a poorer show. This may have been due to last year being a dry spring at a time when bluebells are growing before dying down for the summer months when the woodland floor is more shaded.

The picture shows bluebells lining the path through the Holt on Rowland's Castle on the 12th May. In mid-May most of our nature reserves were making a slow start with little growth in many species including orchids.



**Catherington Down** Apart from cowslips, the Down was looking quite bare until late June and a wonderful show of downland flowers has now appeared, a visit is recommended. One interesting plant now in full flower is **Dropwort** *Filipendula ulmaria*, a member of the Rose family. A single clump can be found on a lower terrace by walking a little way uphill from the Lovedean Lane entrance. It was difficult to find at all last year but has excelled this year, look out for a splash of white. Once surrounded by a rose bush but that has now entirely gone. Pictures below were taken on 30th June 2012. The dainty blooms start off as bright pink buds.



Also seen on the 30th June were over 40 **Common Spotted Orchids**. They were in many colours from pure white to deep pink. We are hoping to see a Frog Orchid this year, not seen for some years



Also seen on the same day was a **Small Tortoiseshell** butterfly sunning itself on a path in a brief moment when the sun shone and some Marbled White butterflies were moving amongst the long grass, as were a few Burnet moths. It is planned that grazing cattle will very soon be back on the Down.



**Dell Piece West** This is the part of the Morrisons supermarket site that was saved for public and wildlife to enjoy. Since being managed as a nature reserve over 12 years ago it has been full of surprises for nature lovers. This year, as with Catherington Down there has been an amazing growth in the vegetation, particularly in the native oaks. A first generation from acorns (from the original 7 oaks still in good health) 10 years ago are now sizeable trees and a new generation of English oaks are shooting up across the area, soon the southern end will become a mature oakwood, maybe some of the youngest oaks could be planted elsewhere in the parish. Our butterfly recorders are making weekly surveys, mainly for butterflies but also looking out for wild flowers, dragonflies and other notable species. At the end of June a group of 5 **Southern Marsh Orchids** were spotted in the marshy area to the west of the site near the board walk. They are similar to spotted orchids but are larger with a much thicker main stem (they may possibly be hybrids). The picture above was taken on 26th June 2012. DPW is also well known for its dragonflies. This fine specimen of a male **Broad-bodied Chaser** *Libellula depressa* was recorded near the orchids, also on the 26th June.



**Butterflies and Moths** After a poor and wet start to the season, butterflies are now appearing in good numbers. John Nundy keeps all our records and produces a detailed analysis of the sightings each season (from the butterfly transects sent in by the team of volunteers) from the 8 main sites in this area. One of the best sites is the Holt and along the footpath (Monarch's Way) extending from Horndean to Rowland's Castle.

These three pictures were all taken at the Holt in between the downpours in early May. The **Brimstone** was the most frequent but there were a few **Holly blues** and a single **Grizzled Skipper**, not often seen at the Holt. Butterfly caterpillars are not so often seen but a few **Comma butterfly larvae** were seen on nettles, upper end of Catherington Down on



20 June.

**Moth Trapping** This has been abandoned on our public sites mainly due to wet weather and needing to plan ahead as we need to set up a generator to power the trap lights so the traps are confined to our gardens where they can run on mains electricity and only left running all night if there is a good weather forecast. 3 members



(JN, JV and RM) use traps in their gardens, a list of species is recorded and all moths are released. There is an increasing interest in Micro-moths since excellent guides are helping identification. The new Field guide to micro-moths with Lewington's illustrations has just been published and there is always 'www.UKMoths' Many moths are day flying and a good

number come to house lights especially if you have a well lit porch light. This year has so far been good for caterpillars. Above on the left a good number of these splendid caterpillars of the **Drinker Moth** were seen crossing the lanes in Blendworth. This one was moved to the grass verge on 9th June 2012. The **Brown Tail** moth caterpillars were seen on 12th May at their regular spot on the path up to Windmill Hill.

**Slugs and Snails** The very wet spring has been an excellent time for some of the less popular invertebrates. On nearly every walk we are having to avoid stepping on **Large Black Slugs** *Arion ater* and the much rarer but even larger **Great Grey** or **Leopard Slug** *Limax maximus*, seen here on 19th May under a fallen beech tree in a Clanfield wood. It has of course been equally good for garden slugs and snails.



Photo on far right © Deryn Hawkins

**Tree Damage** It has been a difficult time for local trees. Recent very high gusts of wind when the trees are in full leaf has brought down a number of large branches. Several Horse Chestnut's have had large branches split off, John Vigay and Stephen Harwood's garden trees had large branches down, one falling across a public footpath. A large beech pollard went over in Lowton's Copse, seen on the right giving plenty of work for volunteers.



**Websites with information on wildlife in S.E.Hampshire**

- Hampshire Wildlife Trust - [WWW.hwt.org.uk](http://WWW.hwt.org.uk)
- Park Wood, Cowplain - [WWW.park-wood.org.uk](http://WWW.park-wood.org.uk)
- John Goodspeed - [WWW.havantnature.net](http://WWW.havantnature.net)
- Brian Fellows - [WWW.brianfellows.clara.net](http://WWW.brianfellows.clara.net).
- Ralph Hollins - [homepage.ntlworld.com/ralph.hollins/](http://homepage.ntlworld.com/ralph.hollins/)
- Horndean Parish Council - [WWW.horndeanpc-hants.gov.uk/countryside](http://WWW.horndeanpc-hants.gov.uk/countryside).
- Rotherlands Cons. Group. Petersfield [WWW.Rotherlands.co.uk](http://WWW.Rotherlands.co.uk)
- Bluebell Woods, Clanfield - [WWW.bluebellwood.wesnetservices.co.uk](http://WWW.bluebellwood.wesnetservices.co.uk)
- Horndean Tree Register - [WWW.HorndeanTrees.co.uk](http://WWW.HorndeanTrees.co.uk)
- Yoells Copse, Lovedean - [WWW.yoellscopse.co.uk](http://WWW.yoellscopse.co.uk)
- South Downs National Park - [WWW.southdowns.gov.uk](http://WWW.southdowns.gov.uk)
- The Sustainability Centre - [WWW.sustainability-centre.org](http://WWW.sustainability-centre.org)
- HWT- South Down Group - via [WWW.wildlife.vigay.com](http://WWW.wildlife.vigay.com)

**A Local micromoth**



*Nemophra degeerella* An attractive day flying Longhorn moth about 16 mm long seen here in a local wood, 16 June.

Note the very long antennae

# HORNDEAN BIODIVERSITY GROUP



**Chairman:** John Vigay, 14, Victory Avenue, Horndean, Hampshire PO8 9PH Tel: 023 92592647 E: wildlife@vigay.com

**Secretary:** Deryn Hawkins, 28a, Frogmore Lane, Horndean, PO8 9QL Tel: 023 92598000 E: deryn.hawkins@ntlworld.com

**Treasurer:** Peter Leversha, 98, Catherington Lane, Horndean PO8 9PB Tel: 023 92592711 E: p.leversha@btinternet.com

**BAP Co-ordinator:** John Telford, Horndean Parish Council, Blendworth Lane, Horndean, PO8 0AA E: conservation.officer@horndeanpc-hants.gov.uk

## **News and Activities**

Sad to say that we have lost 3 valued members of our group over the last 9 months - Dominic left the Horndean Parish Council staff to take a post at Leicestershire University, Stephen Harwood has recently moved house to Hambledon and in June Oliver Saunders has resigned his post as Senior Ranger at HPC. They have all made valuable contributions to the care and management of our local nature reserves and this will undoubtedly put more pressure on the HBG's aim to complete and publish the Horndean Biodiversity Action Plan as soon as possible. With economic and political problems the BAP document will be more important than ever, we still aim to complete the BAP this year and are working to produce a draft by the end of July.

**Gardening for Wildlife** Gardens are now being recognised as Britain's "largest nature reserve" and yet they are very much under threat. Large gardens are being bought up by developers for new housing sites, locally the Councils are being urged to stop 'garden grabbing' schemes. Most of our gardens provide a rich mixture of habitats with potentially a great number of 'reserve' managers who will in turn gain so many benefits for all the family without having to leave home. The local BAP aims to encourage members of the public to swap ideas and experiences and be able to take a closer and longer look at the wildlife attracted to your garden. Few wildlife enthusiasts or gardeners realise just how many species can be found in the average urban garden. Our understanding of garden wildlife has been completely transformed by that remarkable lady Jennifer Owen who has recently completed a highly recommended book "Wildlife of a Garden". She recorded the wildlife in her average urban garden in a suburb of Leicester in great detail. Over 30 years 2673 species of plants and animals were recorded in great detail. This book provides the hard evidence of the immense value of our gardens to wildlife.

**Urban Trees, Hedgerows and street Verges** will all feature in the same way as gardens in the BAP and we all need to play a part in campaigning to save the 'green infrastructure' otherwise government policies of 'localism' could be very biased against wildlife and our environment. As we all agree - rich habitats, once lost or split up can never return. It will certainly be too late if we wait until the economic situation improves or the human population stops expanding.

**The next HBG meeting** This will be held at Napier Hall (north of Merchistoun Hall on the A3) on Wednesday 11th July at 2.0 pm., an agenda will be sent out to members, the main topics will be to look at progress on the Horndean BAP. Those interested to know more would be welcome to attend.



*A very wet landscape to end up - as seen by members on the last guided walk from Q.E. Country Park. It cant last for ever (!?) so do join us on our summer walks.*