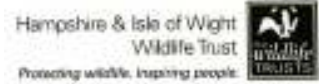




Newsletter No.46 February 2013



Welcome to our early Spring newsletter. In this issue we give an outline of all the many events taking place in the South Down Group area. Paper copies of this newsletter can be found at any of our meetings. This summer there is a wide range of walks - not strenuous hikes but mostly old-fashioned nature rambles with stops to study and photograph the wildlife. They go ahead whatever the weather hoping that we do not get the soakings that we had on some of last years walks !!! Inside pages cover the activities of our local volunteers and notes from the Horndean Biodiversity Group. All groups welcome new members, non-members are also welcome so bring your friends. This winter the countryside has been extra wintry, wet and cold, as seen in the view across the Blendworth fields and hedgerows and on the right a rather flooded Dell Piece West.



The **South Down Group** covers an area extending from Petersfield to Portsdown Hill including **Blendworth, Catherington, Clanfield, Cowplain, Denmead, Hambledon, Horndean, Liss & Liphook, Lovedean, Petersfield area, Purbrook, Rowland's Castle, Waterlooville and Widley.** (Covering Postcodes PO8, PO9 and part of GU30,32 and 33)



<u>Group Committee</u>		Tel: 023....
Chairman	Peter Leversha	92592711
Treasurer	Pennie Medland	92253293
Membership Sec.	Sylvia Leversha	92592711
Newsletter	John Vigay	92592647
Members	Mike Ashton,	Anne Dale,
	Deryn Hawkins, Roger Labrum, Lindsey and Julian Stevens	



Our Next Meeting is on Wednesday 20th March at St.Wilfrid's Church Hall, Padnell Road, Cowplain. Park at the rear of the hall. An opportunity to find out more about one of our most valuable habitats for Wildlife.

"The collection and study of leaf-litter is an ideal activity for the winter months.....records from sorting leaf-litter have a high chance of providing new information as this microhabitat is less often studied" Quoting June Chatfield
June will be discussing the importance to ecology and wildlife of composting, recycling and saving dead wood. These valuable habitats will be mentioned in the local biodiversity action plan.

The SOUTH DOWN GROUP
Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
Protecting wildlife. Inspiring people.

present
An illustrated talk on

Life in the Leaf Litter

Dr June Chatfield is giving an illustrated talk on the importance to ecology and wildlife of saving dead wood, composting etc

7.30 pm. Wednesday 20th March 2013

at St. Wilfrid's Church Hall
Padnell Road, Cowplain

Turn East off the old A3 in Cowplain opposite the Co-Op and St. Wilfrid's is about 200 metres down Padnell Road on the left. Parking is available behind the church. Refreshments available. Non-members welcome.

Admission: £2.50 Further enquiries: Tel: (023) 92592711 or 92592647.

Meetings and Events in the South Down Group area from March to August 2013

Tuesday 19th March - *An Early Spring Walk in the Catherington Area* 2pm.

Come and look for early spring flowers and birds in Catherington Lith and Down. Park carefully and meet in Highcroft Lane, Horndean (Map Ref: SU 702 136) For more info. contact John Goodspeed on 9222 1361 or 078 1143 5252. Dogs on leads welcome.

Wednesday 20th March - *Life in the Leaf Litter* 7.30pm

Dr June Chatfield will give an illustrated talk on the importance to ecology and wildlife of dead wood and composting and the surprising variety of wildlife beneath our feet - see notes above

Sunday 31st March - *Easter Egg Hunt in Park Wood* 12.30pm

Woodland fun for all the family plus path and ditch work for volunteers (£1 to non-members)

Wednesday 17th April - *Growing Wildflowers and 'Weeds' for Wildlife* 7.30pm

After a very brief 'AGM' of the SouthDowns and Horndean Biodiversity Groups, there will be a talk by Jon Stokes of the Tree Council on ways of attracting wildlife into our gardens. There will also be displays of pictures of local wildlife and the local 'BAP' Please give nominations for new members to join our committees BEFORE this meeting. This meeting will be at the usual venue - St Wilfrid's church hall and will finish by 9.30pm

Tuesday 30th April - AGT (=annual get together) of Friends of Park Wood 7.30pm Andrew Watts will be giving a wildlife talk and show some of his superb photographs. All are welcome. Further information inside

Tuesday 7th May - *Ancient Lanes, Hedgerows and Bluebell Woods* 6.30pm

Join us on a circular walk and see at least 24 species of native trees at their best, incl. some rare species in Yoell's Copse. Handout available. Meet at Catherington Down car park opp. the school (MR: SU 695 144) Post code PO8 0TD

Wednesday 8th May - *Spring on the Butser Hill Slopes* 7.00pm

Short walk on steep slopes to find spring wildflowers and birds. Meet & park with care in Limekiln Lane (MR: SU710 198) Details from John Goodspeed on 07811 435252.

Saturday 11th May - *WOODLAND FESTIVAL in Park Wood* 10am-4pm

Organised by Friends of Park Wood, Cowplain, free entrance, all welcome - More details below

Wednesday 29th May - *Shoulder of Mutton Hill (N. of Petersfield)* 7.00pm

Walk up Shoulder of Mutton Hill, return past Week Green Farm, about 3 miles incl. some steep slopes. Park in road nr Steep church 1 mile north of Petersfield (MR: SU 746 253). For more info. contact Andrew Powling on 023 9225 8457 or E-mail apowling01@btinternet.com Dogs on lead welcome.

Saturday 15th June - *The Catherington Nature Trail* 10am - 1pm

Circular walk seeing the natural and historical features of Catherington Down and Lith. See the flora and a panoramic view of the Solent. Meet at Catherington car park opp. the school along Catherington Lane PO8 0TD (MR: 058 192) For more information ring 023 92592647

Wednesday 26th June - *Orchids on Noar Hill* 7.00pm

Explore the ancient chalk pits for orchids and other wildlife. Park in the lane north of Charity Farm near Selbourne (MR: SU737 322) Some steep slopes, No dogs. On the following day **Thurs. 27th June** there will be a **walk at Noar Hill** starting **10.30am**. Both led by plant expert Dr. Nigel Johnson (Tel:01489 877324)

Wednesday 10th July - *Blendworth and Chalton Windmill* 7.00pm

Climb from Blendworth up to Chalton Windmill looking mainly for wild flowers and enjoying the views. Meet and park by Blendworth church (MR: SU710 134) Some stiles to climb. Dogs on lead OK Info: 9222 1361

Saturday 13th July - *Wildlife at Pagham Harbour RSPB Nature Reserve* 9.30am

A walk along the "Pools" and ditches to St Wilfrid's Chapel and the harbour entrance. See birds, flowers and dragonflies, led by Lawrence Holloway. If the weather is fine an afternoon visit to the new Medmerry reserve is possible. Meet at the visitor centre 1 mile south of Sidlesham on B2145 from Chichester, PO20 7NF. (MR: SU856965) Bring picnic lunch.

The South Down Group would welcome some new members on the committee to help with our main task of organising our programme of walks and talks. Please let us have your ideas or suggestions for events as they need to be planned at least six months ahead.



HBG NEWS

TREE PLANTING Local volunteers worked hard with HBG and Horndean Parish Councillors and Rangers last November on a very wet day to plant 20 native trees, mainly oak in Jubilee Field last November. We are now waiting for the leaves to open. The next stage is to plant hedging trees along the northern hedgerow which has just been 'laid' by the HPC Rangers. We are then planning the final stage to plant another 10 standard native trees next November,



mainly oak, field maple and small-leaved lime. There will be another call for volunteers in the autumn. Many thanks to those that helped on this project and special thanks to Cllr Elaine Tickell and family for providing excellent refreshments.

HORNDEAN TREE TRAIL - Jubilee Field and the surrounding hedgerows are being proposed as the centre of a tree trail where visitors can see representatives of most of our native trees and shrubs. A number of blossom and berry species will be planted to encourage wildlife and rarer natives such as the Small-leaved Lime and Wild Service tree will be introduced. This project will be a joint venture between HBG members, the parish Rangers and local Tree Wardens.

HBG members are currently making a big effort to complete the local BAP (biodiversity action plan). One aim of the BAP is to present ideas and projects of ways in which we can all play a part in maintaining local habitats for the benefit of wildlife. We urge everyone to go to the meeting at St Wilfrid's Hall, on 17 April where there will be displays of local projects and photographs of wildlife. The emphasis will be on gardening for wildlife, ending with an illustrated talk by Jon Stokes.

Notes from **FRIENDS of PARK WOOD**

A WOODLAND FESTIVAL in Park Wood, Cowplain is on Saturday 11th May 2013

Friends of Park Wood are holding a Woodland Festival to celebrate everything to do with woodland. There will be a variety of stalls (including SDGrp and HBG) and entertainments with plenty of activities for children (No entrance fees) More info. can be found on www.park-wood.org The Wood is on the London Road, Cowplain between Wallis Rd and Queens Rd where there is limited parking.



FRIENDS OF THE BLUEBELL WOODS

The volunteer group working at Lowton's Copse, Blagdon Copse and Heydon Woods just north of Clanfield have recently changed their working day to the first Saturday in the month and usually meet at the gate in North Street Lane at 10 am. (MR: 470 179) Recently the group have been clearing up fallen timber and in view of the recent cold weather have been having a good bonfire, seen here on 5th January. More volunteers would be welcome - if you would like to know more visit :- www.bluebellwood.wesnetservices.co.uk or phone 92596720 for a newsletter.



NATURE NOTES for winter 2013

Not a lot to report this winter - the only plants that seem to have done well are mosses and ivy providing valuable food and shelter for wildlife but ivy is rather overdoing the ground cover !



BIRDS have visited our gardens in large numbers this winter but the most numerous visitors have been blackbirds. As many as ten at a time have visited us and one of them is speckled white, we call him 'snowflakes' but he gets chased by the others. Song thrushes also get chased away but they seem to find plenty of food in the leaf litter. Find out more about 'leaf litter' and its value to wildlife. Come to our meeting at St Wilfrid's 20th March. Sampling and recording finds in leaf-litter would add to our species list for the BAP. !

LICHENS AND MOSSES Gloomy winter days are the best time to survey lichens, in churchyards and on trees. Since many lichens grow high up in the canopy then there are good opportunities to study them when winter storms or chainsaws bring branches down to the ground as can be seen on these ash branches where damaged tree logs were stacked up near Roads Hill on the south side of Catherington Down.



Finally - WILD FLOWERS in January



Winter Heliotrope (*Petasites fragrans*) can be found just outside the entrance to Merchistoun Hall along the hedgerow and has been in flower through most of Jan and Feb. Although originally a garden escape it is now naturalised and locally frequent in Hampshire.

Abraham-Isaac-jacob (*Trachystemon orientalis*) is a member of the Borage family, and has been flowering throughout February just to the west of the picnic site at Catherington Lith. Rare in Hampshire this is one of only two localities where it can be seen in the wild.



The next newsletter will be issued late September, the Editor (JV) would welcome any contributions especially images of interesting wildlife that you may see this spring and summer especially if they are taken on any of our walks. We look forward to seeing you.

J.V. 28th February 2013