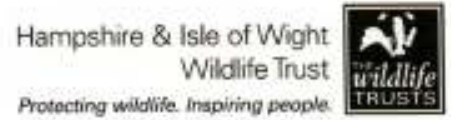




Newsletter No.49a
April 2014
(Update of February NL49)



Welcome to the South Down Group newsletter which gives details of meetings from now until August 2014, plus a few nature notes and local activities during this exceptional spell of gloomy weather with some brief news from the Horndean Bio Group. To add a splash of colour we start with this cheerful picture of Celandines taken by Deryn along Frogmore Lane on the 11th February. All we need now is for the sun to appear.

Our next newsletter will be produced in October 2014. The editor (JV) welcomes your comments and pictures etc by 31st September, 2014.



Meetings and Events in the South Down Group area from March to August 2014

Wednesday 19th March "Bugs and Beetles of the South Downs"
7.30 - 9.30pm

An illustrated talk by Dr Jonty Denton - on the creatures that are often overlooked in our gardens and local nature reserves.

To be held at St Wilfrid's Hall, Padnell Rd, Cowplain PO8 8DZ (Map Ref: SU 694 112)



Wednesday 16th April "Recording the Wildlife on your Doorstep" 7.30 - 9.30pm

An introduction by Dr David Rumble for those wishing to learn more about the wonderful biodiversity in our gardens and the local area, also how we can help to record the local fauna and flora. There will be a raffle during the evening.

The Horndean Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) has now been completed and a preview will be presented at this meeting.
To be held at St Wilfrid's Hall - details above under Wed 19th March talk.

Wednesday 14th May "Catherington Down and the Ancient Lanes" 6.30 - 9pm

An evening circular walk from Yoell's Copse to Catherington Down along Ancient Lanes, including a preview of the Horndean Tree Trail seeing at least 24 species of native trees at their best. Meet at Jubilee Field car park off Catherington Lane/Crouch Lane (Map Ref: SU 694 136) Dogs **on leads** welcome. More info: contact JV on 92592647

For those who attended Richard Hedley's fascinating talk on Hampshire Woodlands we include 2 events in May held at the two copses that he spoke about :-

Saturday 24th May - "Walk to Chapett's and Shutt's Copse" 9.30am A visit to enjoy the special orchids and other woodland wildflowers. Meet at Chapett's Copse, Coombe Lane, West Meon at 10.30am (Map Ref: SU 653 234)

Thursday 29th May - "Orchid Count" 10am - 3pm Help required, some skill in plant recognition required. Meet at Chapett's Copse as above. Contact Godfrey Rhymes on 01730 829208, check as date depends on orchid development.

Wednesday 30th June "Hazleton Common" Evening walk 7.00pm

Explore Hazleton Common and Dell Piece West for summer flowers and birds. Meet and park at the end of Padnell Rd., Cowplain (Map Ref: SU 700 113) Contact John Goodspeed on 078 1143 5252. Dogs on leads welcome.

Saturday 2nd August "The Catherington Nature Trail" Follow a circular route around Catherington Down and Catherington Lith to see the summer flowers and butterflies. Meet Catherington car park opp school at 9.30am (M Ref: SU 695 144) Finish by lunchtime with pub lunch or picnic on the Down. Contact John on: 92592647

Your suggestions for talks and events next winter are welcomed, please phone or E-mail a group member listed below or tell us at one of the meetings listed above.



Welcome sights on the 1st April



NATURE NOTES

With such a dismal winter there is little to report but we are at last seeing a few signs of spring, there is a lot of frog activity in many of the local ponds, frog spawn has already been spotted and birds are busy building their nests.

BIRD NEWS

It is wonderful to hear and see **Skylarks** flying above the fields in Blendworth during mid-February. There have been a number of seagulls flying inland across Cowplain and Horndean and 18 Feb some seagulls were seen chasing a heron across the area. **Sparrowhawks** have recently been visiting local gardens. A male bird caught a blackbird in our back garden on the 12th Feb. and a lady in Murray Road called me to see a magnificent female bird that had been sitting on her fence on the 14th Feb. in very wet weather presumably waiting for its dinner to turn up. It did not mind being photographed and stayed there for about an hour. There are a large number of blackbirds visiting gardens this winter and a few as usual with white feathers.



Fungi, Lichens and Mosses have all appeared in abundance this winter, especially mosses that are spreading everywhere. Many have produced a great number of capsules and can be seen on the tops of walls around our roads, not so welcome on the paths that become very slippery. The fungus seen on a HWT walk around Finchdean on 9th January was **Velvet Shank** *Flammulina velutipes* a common winter fruiting fungus adding colour to a dull day, we did not see any winter thrushes that we were looking for !

TREE NEWS - TREE PLANTING



We are pleased to see that all the trees planted last November in Jubilee Field have survived all the recent gales, now we await the new leaves opening. This year 350 small trees were planted on a really stormy day on the 8th February, 200 were planted around the Old School Field and around 150 along the west side of the Five Heads Road recreation ground led by the Ranger and local Tree Wardens. A big thankyou to the ten brave volunteers that managed to plant all the trees by lunchtime in such stormy and cold conditions, and a very special thanks to Elaine who provided hot drinks and delicious cakes ! A recent inspection shows that these trees have all survived the recent gales. They contain a good percentage of flowering and fruiting species and will add to our corridors for wildlife as well as produce a wind break.



HORNDEAN BIODIVERSITY GROUP

The HBG are now working very hard to complete the local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) by the end of April so that we can introduce it to everyone at the meeting on 16th April. The Group is working closely with Horndean Parish Council to bring together all those keen on observing, recording and conserving the local wildlife. One aim is to organise a number of projects, surveys and activities so we are very keen to recruit more volunteers to join in. There are a great variety of projects that will be suitable for all ages, physical abilities, and expertise. There's something for everyone and it is now that our countryside and wildlife are so much under threat.



PROJECTS include **A POND Survey** **POND conservation work** **More TREE Planting in the Autumn** Surveys of **Butterflies and Moths**, **Wild Flowers**, **Hover Flies**, and many others

Don't become an armchair naturalist, the Natural World needs you more than ever.

Group contacts

Peter Leversha	<i>SDGrp Chairman</i>	023 92592711	p.leversha@btinternet.com
John Vigay	<i>Newsletter Editor</i>	023 92592647	wildlife@vigay.com
John Telford	<i>Snr. Countryside Ranger HPC</i>	02392597766	john.telford@horndeanpc-hants.gov.uk
Deryn Hawkins	<i>HBG Secretary</i>	02392598000	deryn.hawkins1@gmail.com