

5th May 2005

Yew Hill

- It is pleasing to report that the disease resistant elms that were planted a few months ago are coming into leaf.
- I was at the reserve on April 26th with Ben Sparggons who was mowing a small area. We are finding that the repeated mowing he is doing is being successful in getting the brambles under control.
- In another area we undertook some management of an over-large nettle bed.

Magdalen Hill

- Our guided walk on 23rd April was a victim of bad weather but four of us enjoyed seeing the cowslips, a Holly Blue and two female Orange Tips, roosting on Jack-by-the-hedge, and thus exhibiting their superb camouflage.
- The sheep are now grazing the extension and are avoiding eating too many cowslips. The good news, butterfly wise, is that several Grizzled Skippers have been seen and one Dingy that I know off. Patrick also saw a Small Copper on 29th April - the earliest he can remember seeing. We are undertaking conservation measures to encourage these three species of butterfly and are interested to hear of your sightings at MHD or indeed any of our three reserves.

Bentley Station Meadow

- The weather was kind on Monday 2nd May and 15 of us enjoyed a stroll in the meadow and in the adjoining forest. We saw 7 species of butterfly. Orange-Tips were very evident and we recalled the name given to them by Peter Beale "Lady of the Woods". The spring flowers were doing well and it was good to see that various conservation work had encouraged violets, primroses and Ladies Smock - all plants that are necessary for various species of butterfly.

24th April 2005

Lynn Fomison reports that "The walk at Magdalen Hill Down was blighted by poor weather - shame as it had been advertised on South Today! However the 4 of us who braved the wet were rewarded by an excellent view of Holly Blue and two female Orange Tips. These were roosting on the flower heads of Jack-by-the-hedge and were difficult to spot. We have been trying to encourage more Jack-by-the-hedge and numerous plants could be seen. Conservation work works!! 100 sheep Dorset/Mule crosses will be arriving very soon."

25th January 2005

The work party at Yew Hill was well attended. We burnt a lot of scrub that had been cut on previous occasions. Regular cutting is preventing hawthorns and dog wood from taking over from the very special grassland. Ben Spraggons did some mowing - we are finding repeat cutting to be very effective in getting the bramble under control. Some people were working away from the fire. Colin Matthews, Voluntary Reserve Manager was cutting and gathering up scrub, Patrick Fleet was working with a brush cutter on the bit in front of reservoir. Juliet Bloss and Peter Woolner were clearing derelict elders from the hedgerow adjacent to Hill Top. We were very pleased with what we achieved on our last work party this season.

18th January 2005

Wanted for North Down (adjacent to Magdalen Hill Down, Winchester)

We are looking to set up a transect at North Down but need about 5 volunteers. So far I have had one as a result of the appeal in the newsletter. You would be committing yourself to about 5 visits of around 1.5 to 2 hours in the period 1 April to 30th September. You would be involved in the exciting opportunity to see how butterflies colonise an ex-arable field. The data collected is invaluable to BC and to Defra in illustrating the benefits of habitat creation. And this will really help butterflies. If you are interested in participating please contact Lynn 01962 772251. Training will be provided to newcomers.