



**Butterfly Conservation
Friends of Bentley Station
Meadow Butterfly Reserve**

Dates for your Diary

Conservation work parties:

Sunday 19 November 2006

Wednesday 13th December 2006

Sunday 7th January 2007

Wednesday 7th March 2007

We meet at 10:30am in the car park at Bentley Station (SU792 432), or join us later on the reserve. We usually finish about 2:00pm. Parking is available in Station Road, or in the station car park which has a pay and display machine.

Bring stout shoes or boots to wear and gardening gloves. If you wish bring a packed lunch too. Tools are supplied but bring a favourite pair of secateurs or loppers if you like.

Conservation Work Parties are very important to help maintain the habitat for flowers and butterflies, as well as being very enjoyable. Please come along if you can, even if only for an hour or so. Every hour worked really counts and is very much appreciated.

For any further information please contact Lynn Fomison on 01962 772251

An invitation

Members of Hampshire & IOW branch of Butterfly Conservation will have received the September newsletter with details of this years' Branch AGM and Members Day on Saturday 11th November, being held at St Barnabas Church Hall. **Non-members welcome.** There is a good selection of talks to be heard and there will be displays etc. The traditional Afternoon Tea will also be available.

St Barnabas Church Hall, Fromond Road, Weeke, Winchester. Doors open at 1.00pm for the AGM at 1.30pm. The talks are scheduled to start at 2.30pm.



Newsletter – Autumn 2006

Another invitation

Many of you will know Nigel Spring from his years at The Kingcombe Centre. Nigel is now running work parties at Butterfly Conservation's new Alners Gorse reserve, which is near Hazelbury Bryan in Dorset. Any help we can give Nigel will be most appreciated and Hampshire members are going to his WP on Saturday March 10th. Contact Lynn if you would be interested in coming along.

Nigel might also be planning conservation work party trips abroad in 2007. Contact him if interested in joining any of his work parties. Email nigelspring@yahoo.co.uk or telephone him on 07981.776767.

Promoting the reserve

We had seven walks in all this year – some public walks and some visits arranged for specific groups, like the U3A Ambling Group. When we host visits under the Defra scheme of Educational Access it raises £100 in grant income, so if you belong to a group that would like to make a visit contact Lynn. Bookings being taken now for 2007.

We have also sought to promote the reserve to local people by having displays at local events. This year we have been at Bird World, at Forest Lodge's Gardening for Wildlife Weekend and at the Blackmoor Apple Tasting Day.

Good News

A new Volunteer, Mike Young, has been taking super photos at BSM. A number of them have been on the branch website, including a super Crab Spider! – a lovely illustration of the fact that our sites are Nature Reserves and that all wildlife is treasured and admired!

Purple Power

A 30 minutes Nature programme on "His Imperial Majesty" (*the Purple Emperor, of course*) went out on Radio 4 at 9pm on Monday 18th September, repeated at 11am the following morning. The programme was produced by Brett Westwood and was recorded largely at Fermyn Wood, Northants this July. Matthew Oates was involved (on behalf of the Master Tree Project and all people of Purple disposition), plus Doug Goddard of BC Northants Branch, a couple of out of season birders, and readings from some of the voluminous Purple literature. It was absolutely excellent and I hope you heard it.

The good news is that Matthew was able to spend some time in the meadow this summer and as a result has located the tree nearby where Purple Emperors assemble. On the day he was there (17th July) he and Patrick Fleet saw numerous females laying eggs, which is wonderful news.

I know from Matthew, and from Ashley Whitlock, that Purple Emperors were very active in the first half of July in areas of Alice Holt. I adored Ashley's very personalised accounts of the activities of the Purple Emperors on the branch web site. And I liked the account from Mike Young too. On the 1st July, in the Forestry Commission car park off Gravel Road, Mike spoke to a gentleman from Kent who saw a Purple Emperor alight on his wife's trouser leg. He had a photo of it on his digital camera that he showed to Mike.

BBC TV Programme

The 2006 Purple Emperor season at Alice Holt Forest will be featured on The Great British Summer programme on BBC 1 on Sunday 12th November at 8pm. Other butterflies will be featured in subsequent programmes on the 19th and 26th November.



In the Meadow

Thelma walked the first butterfly transect of the year and, as ever, the meadow provided a good selection of springtime birds including Green Woodpecker and Chiff Chaff. Primroses and Celandines were in flower but no Violets. The Catkins on the Goat Willow looked lovely with the sun on them.

Throughout the year transect walkers provided lots of notes of the wildlife seen and heard in addition to butterflies. Birds regularly seen/heard include Blackcap, Bullfinch and Buzzard. Thelma is pretty sure she heard a Grasshopper Warbler on 15th July – described as sounding like a fishing reel.

Sue Clark found a nice moth on 31st May – which was identified by Tim Norriss, from her description, as *Nemophora dogeerella*. Unusually its antennae are about four times its body length. Dragonflies and Damselflies including The Beautiful Demoiselle were regularly seen. Other sightings have included a Fox, Roe Deer, Hornets, and Grasshoppers.

Alton Natural History Society Visit 25th June

Dr June Chatfield was able to show us a Kentish Snail – with a shell so thin we could see its kidney and its heart beating. It is the lack of calcium that causes such thin shells.

At the Alton Natural History Society meeting on 12th July, Dr David Lonsdale, from the Society, reported to Lynn that no Glow-Worms were seen in the meadow, but that a few were found on the opposite side of the tarmac track. David has advised us that they need a better mosaic of short grass.

Lynn loves to receive observations from in the meadow, either by email or by transect walkers' notes on the weekly sheet. These details are so helpful in the compilation of the annual report, of interest in this newsletter and, of course, most helpful in planning our management of the reserve.

News from Ken Willmott

I have heard from Ken that, unfortunately, he was not able to fit in a visit to the meadow this summer. He has had really great trips to the USA and to Brazil, and also a busy summer here both helping Dan Hoare, BC's Regional Officer, and filming with Chris Packham. He also helped Mr Murata from Japan (a BC Member) find Purple Emperors to photograph in Alice Holt.

Summer Work

Patrick Fleet undertook the usual summer work of keeping the path around the butterfly transect cut. Volunteer Ben Spraggon cut some of the larger areas of small bramble and scrub in the grassland with his munching mowing machine.

We can see from the transect figures that both Brown Argus and Common Blue benefited from several areas being kept short.

Winter Work

We have plans to fell a number of Turkey Oak, Ash and Sycamore trees in the meadow, in line with a conservation strategy agreed last year, to let more light onto main areas of the meadow.

Five cattle arrived earlier in October. They all come from Millers Ark Animals and are: -
Moosie – a big brown Angus cross
Phillippa – an Irish Moiled
Ishtah and Imogen – both young Irish Moileds
Hazel – a dun and white Belted Galloway.

Newsletter

Lynn has written much of this newsletter - apologies for any errors/omissions.

Items are welcomed from anyone who visits the Meadow. Please send any items for the Spring 2007 Newsletter to Lynn by 15th March 2007.

Bentley Station Meadow Who's Who

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Branch Website
<http://www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk>

National Web site
<http://www.butterfly-conervation.org>

