



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

**Dates for your Diary – Conservation
Work Parties**

Wednesday 5th November 2008

Wednesday 10th December

Saturday 24th January *

Tuesday 27th January 2009 **

Wednesday 11th February

*** with Alton Scouts**

**** with Blackwater Valley Conservation
Volunteers**

***On both these days some help from experienced
BSM work party volunteers would be most
appreciated. Let Lynn know if you can come.***

We meet at 10:00am in the car park at Bentley Station (SU792 432), or join us later on the reserve. We usually finish about 2:30pm. 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

Cattle

The cattle arrived on Monday 20th October. As usual, Elizabeth Miller has supplied them. This year we have three Irish Moiled cows called Clarity, Rose and Genevieve. Staff from ASA who checked the cattle in the past have now moved away to offices elsewhere, but four local residents have formed a rota to check the cattle daily.

**Newsletter – Autumn
2008**

Promoting the reserve

We have had fourteen walks since 1st October 2007 – some public walks, and some visits arranged for specific groups, like the Liphook Ramblers, Alton Cubs, Medstead Beavers and Rowhill Nature Reserve Society. Hosting such visits under the Natural England scheme of Educational Access raises £100 per visit in grant income for us, provided over six people attend and the visit duration is two hours. So, if you belong to a group that would like to make a visit to the Meadow contact Lynn. (Groups of friends are acceptable.) Such visits are FREE to the group concerned. **Bookings being taken now for 2009.**

Butterfly Transect

We need to add another person to the rota of people who record butterflies each summer at the Meadow. Can you spare an hour or so on about six occasions in the period April to September?

Transect records are immensely useful to us, and the help that volunteers give with this activity is very valued. It is important that transect walkers have free time in the week, as well as at weekends, as the transect walk has to be fitted in on a fine day between 10.45am and 3.45pm.

Thelma Smalley is our transect co-ordinator, and also one of the transect walkers. She will be happy to tell you more about what helping with a transect entails. (01962 734328)



2008 Butterfly Season

The Hampshire & Isle of Wight Annual Butterfly & Moth Report, published by the branch in April each year - and provided free to our members, will give full details of how all the species fared. Obviously, the summer weather meant it was a poor year yet again. Some species survived the changeable weather better than others.

Sadly, total numbers of butterflies seen on transect in 2008 in the Meadow were even lower than 2007.

But Sue Clark had one really good sighting – a Purple Emperor laying eggs.

Other wildlife sightings were good too. Read on...

In the Meadow

These notes of sightings were provided by transect walkers.

Birds seen: - Chiffchaff, Great Tit, Wren, Jay, Green Woodpecker, Black Cap, Nuthatch, Robin, Magpie, Dunnock, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Blue Tit, Blackbird, Long-tailed Tit, Bullfinch and Chaffinch. Pleasingly, Tree Creepers were seen on several occasions, and a Cuckoo was heard on 9th May.

Moths seen: - Mike Young saw Broad-bordered Bee Hawkmoth twice in mid May. Also seen through the season were: Common Carpet, Speckled Yellow, Straw Dot, Burnet Companion, Sallow Kitten, Six-spot Burnet and Silver Y.

Flowers seen:-

April - In flower Primrose, Celandine, Wood Anemone, Violet, Wild Strawberry, Speedwell, Blackthorn, Gorse, Goat Willow, Cowslip, Ground Ivy, False Oxlip, Wood Spurge, and Bluebell.

May – On 3rd May Sue Clark discovered Adder's-tongue fern, and saw Herb Paris in flower and Bugle just starting to come out. By the end of May Sue reported all these plants flowering: Wood Sorrel, May blossom, Tormentil, Greater Stitchwort, Comfrey, Cuckoo Flower, Lesser Stitchwort, Common Sorrel, Birdsfoot Trefoil, Meadow Buttercup, Ragged Robin, Ox-eye Daisy, Brooklime and the first Dog Roses. However, Bugle was getting overtaken by other vegetation and starting to go over.

June - Orchids in flower, but being swamped by long grass. Also in flower: Agrimony, Tufted Vetch, Bramble, Knapweed, St Johns Wort, Greater Birdsfoot Trefoil and Marsh Thistle.

July - Yellow Meadow Vetchling, Betony, and Sue added that Agrimony was looking good and has increased in the last two years, as has Hairy St Johns Wort.

August - Angelica, Water Mint, Sneezewort and Devilsbit Scabious starting to flower. By the end of the month, Fleabane was looking good.

The majority of plants on this list are useful nectar sources, or are plants caterpillars feed on.

Other interesting sightings included Emperor Dragonflies, Beautiful and Banded Demoiselles, as well as other unidentified dragonflies and damselflies. Muntjac Deer were seen on several occasions, and various beetles, bumble bees, hoverflies and hornets were all plentiful too.

Dan Hoare, our BC Regional Officer, found Small Tortoiseshell Larva on Nettles in the reserve, but only one adult was seen on transect.

Promoting butterflies - A nice Christmas present

Sandy Harman has produced a new DVD entitled "The Best of Butterfly Days - PLUS". It is compiled of some of the best clips from the past five versions of "Butterfly Days", and has much fresh material. The PLUS refers to a new section showing some of the rarer butterflies that visit this country, and/or were once resident here - a further eleven species. This DVD can be likened to a field trip around Britain to see butterflies during the six months from April to September. Fifty-eight species (in addition to the eleven in the PLUS section) are identified by discreet captions, as are most of the other subjects. These include caterpillars, dragonflies, moths and wild flowers etc. There is no music, minimal voiceover, and only natural sounds of the countryside. Detailed close-ups abound. The DVD costs £8.00, including p&p, and of this, at least £6.00 goes to our Branch funds (or more if you add something to cover the postage costs, as many members have). To buy a copy, just send a cheque, payable to 'S Harman', to 31 Upper Manor Road, Milford, Godalming, GU8 5JW - and why not get one for a friend as well - Christmas is coming! You can enjoy a beautiful view of our wonderful butterflies, and help support our Branch at the same time!



“All about butterflies”

Looking for a Christmas present for a child? This book by Matthew Oates has just been published, and is recommended. It is well illustrated, and has lots of “Did you know” questions posed and makes interesting reading. Price £4.99. Published by Natural History - ISBN 978-1-84773-050-3.

You can view a few pages on the Amazon website.

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 2009 Newsletter to Lynn by the 15th March 2009.

Bentley Station Meadow Who’s Who

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Branch Website

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

National Website

<http://www.butterfly-conservation.org>

