



**Butterfly Conservation
Friends of Yew Hill Nature
Reserve**

Newsletter Autumn 2006

Dates for your Diary

Work Parties

Meet at end of Old Kennels Lane (SU451 269) near junction Port Lane/ Millers lane or join us on the Reserve.(SU 455 264). Usually 10am to 4pm but helpers welcome for part of day. An odd hour helps so please come!
Any enquiries Colin Matthews 01794 388272

Wednesday 1st November

Wednesday 29th November

Wednesday 31st January

Wednesday 28th February

On the hill

Butterfly News from Brian Fletcher for 2006 will be given in the Spring 2007 newsletter.

It's good to receive peoples' notes of sightings of birds and other wildlife as these records are an important part of our Higher Level Stewardship agreement (which started on 1st August)

This recent report from Tim Walker is the sort we like to get..

Seen at Yew Hill on Monday 1/10 at about 1830

2 Grey Partridge
2 Swallow west
1 Common Buzzard mobbed by male Kestrel

Rare shield bug found..

Phil Budd wrote to me in May reporting that he had found a scarce shield bug *Sehirus impressus* (associated with Bastard Toadflax and possibly Marjoram) - 16 of them. I was actually looking for these at Yew Hill because (a) there is a lot of BT there and (b) it is about the closest good, accessible chalk grassland to Southampton. This is part of a survey of shield bugs by the Southampton NHS. St Catherine's Hill is another site and they could be at MHD. Elsewhere they are mainly found in Dorset and Wiltshire. Available information suggests that this shield bug requires sites to be grazed by animals (i.e. not mown or uncut). The National Status is Notable (NB).

WESSEX ORCHID SOCIETY VISIT TO YEW HILL, 17 JUNE 2006

Report from Richard Hart

There were large numbers of Fragrant Orchids in full bloom. If the count last year was correct at 1400, then 2000+ would be a guess for this display. There were a number of white specimens.

We saw some dozens of Common Spotted Orchids, mostly on the upper part of the main reserve and in the triangle near the reservoir. Some had no spots on the leaves: it was suggested that these were hybrids.

We saw some dozens of Pyramidal Orchids on the middle, upper and triangle parts of the reserve. We saw about a dozen Butterfly Orchids, still in full bloom, on the triangle part of the reserve. No opinion was offered about whether they were Greater or Lesser Butterfly Orchids.

We saw many spikes of Knapweed Broomrape. We did not see Common Twayblade, Bee or Frog Orchids. We saw Brimstone, Meadow Brown, Large White (below the reserve), Small Heath (one, near lower entrance) and Common Blue.

Promoting the reserve

As well as four public walks we arranged visits for a number of groups including Wessex Orchid Society, Compton Scouts and Leigh House Hospital.

We were also pleased to welcome Oliver's Battery Countryside Group for a tour of the reserve as part of their celebrations to open their own Conservation Area, which is located a few hundred yards away from Yew Hill.

When we host visits under the Defra scheme of educational access it raises a £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.

The reserve was brought to the attention of local people in another way too. Ivan Arnold had the Yew Hill display board and BC leaflets at the Oliver's Battery fete in early September. It is a bit sad that lots of local people are not aware of the existence of the reserve. The plan is to put a small piece of Reserve News in the Oliver's Battery/ Badger Farm Community News which comes out quarterly.

Images of and around Yew Hill

Jeanette Lloyd has super items for sale -photos, cards, postcards, calendars, mugs & bags with images of Yew Hill & its surroundings. These were on sale at Oliver's Battery Fete in September but if you missed them there and are interested phone 01962 851915. Jan is also planning on having the items on sale at members Day on November 11th.

Grazing and other grassland management

Cattle will arrive to graze the reserve in mid October. Once the vegetation is short there they will move onto Hilltop

Ben Spraggon cut several areas through the summer and this has worked well in controlling the bramble.

We are planning on clearing small scrub from the grassland at winter work parties.

We were grateful to have the help of Compton Scouts in clearing ragwort from Hilltop in July. This was part of their Community Project. They were also learning butterfly & plant identification
Lynn Fomison

Problems

It is sad to have to recount the numerous problems that have occurred this summer, but we need to publicise them in order that friends of the reserve can help me by reporting anything untoward as soon as it is seen.

In the first part of June on several occasions open fires had been lit and patches of flower- rich grassland had been turned to patches of ashes. One of these was just feet from two bee orchids – our rarest & most precious orchid. Also hot foil disposable barbeques had been stood on the ground again resulting in the killing of patches of turf. On each occasion empty alcohol bottles and other litter had been left. About the same time several lengths of barbed wire had been cut out of the fence on the Northern boundary.

I erected signs saying no fires but these were ignored & possibly even burnt! by a group of 5 teenagers who camped overnight in two tents.

There was another incident of overnight camping later on in the summer & two incidents of vandalism of the notice board and signboard being daubed with red & green paint.

I know that everyone who values the reserve finds such incidents very distressing and I am grateful to the many people who have helped by ringing me, clearing up litter & giving support in other ways.
Lynn Fomison

Newsletter

This newsletter has been written mainly by Ivan & Lynn. Apologies for any errors/omissions. Items welcomed from you – it all helps to make the newsletter interesting and informative. Please send any items for the Spring Newsletter to Ivan or to Lynn by 1st April 2007.

Distribution List

If you are receiving this newsletter by post but have an email address please let us know as sending by email saves money and time. Thank you.

An invitation

Members of Butterfly Conservation will have had the Branch September newsletter giving details of the AGM and Members Day on Saturday 11th November at St Barnabas Church Hall. Doors open 1pm. Non members welcome. There is a good selection of talks to be heard, displays etc

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. Contact him for more details if you are interested. nigelspring@yahoo.co.uk
Tel: 07981.776767. Any help Hampshire Members can give will be most appreciated. Hampshire members are going to one of these WPs on Saturday March 10th. Contact Lynn
Nigel might also be planning conservation work party trips abroad in 2007. Contact him if interested

Yew Hill Who's Who

Newsletter Editor & Local Friends Co-ordinator

Ivan Arnold 38 Old Kennels Lane, Winchester
SO22 4JR 01962 866706

Voluntary Reserve Manager Colin Matthews
01794 388272

Reserves sub-committee Chairman

Jenny Mallett Great Fontley Farm Fareham PO15
6EA 01329 832177

Reserve Warden Patrick Fleet 01256 398471

Butterfly Transect Co-ordinator Brian Fletcher
01962 882746

Cattle Owner Sarah Jackson 01962 733969
mo 07889 750577

Reserves Officer for all BC' s Hampshire

Reserves Lynn Fomison Mount Pleasant,
Parkstone Road, Ropley Hants SO24 0EW
01962 772251

Branch web site

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

National Web site www.butterfly-conservation.org